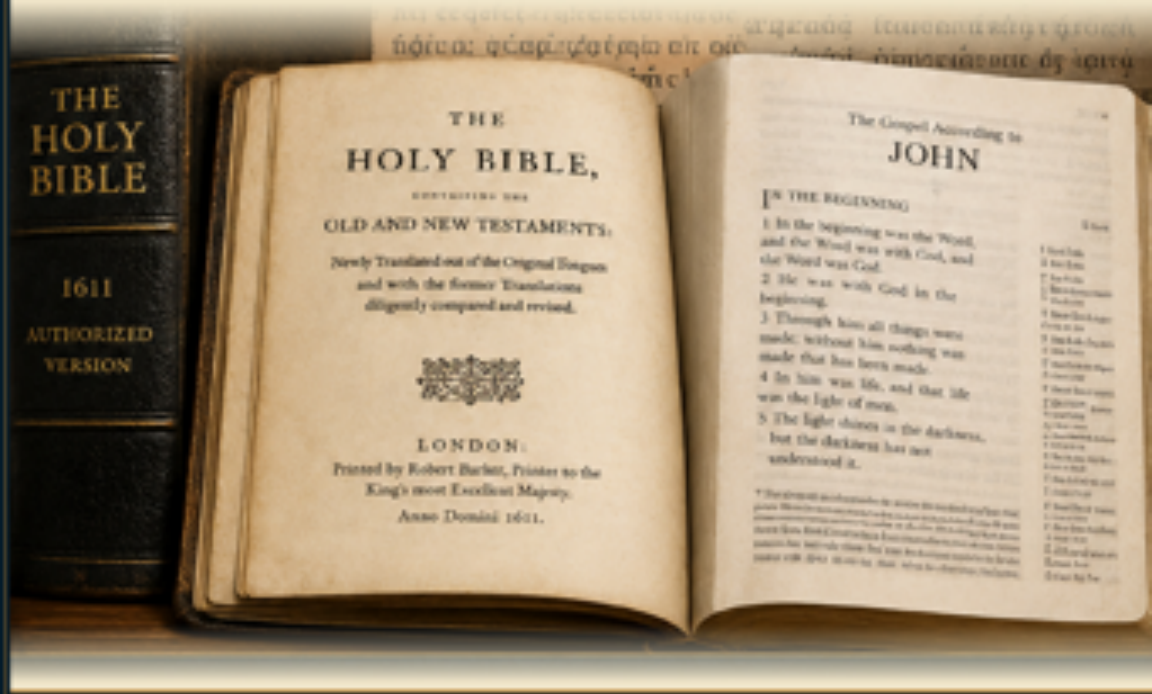
*"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."*
1 Thessalonians 5:21

# WHICH VERSION?

## AUTHORIZED *or* REVISED?

A SCRIPTURAL AND HISTORICAL EXAMINATION
*of the Authorized Version and Modern Versions of the Bible*




DEFENDING THE AUTHORITY, ACCURACY, AND PRESERVATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

PHILIP MAURO

PREPARED AND EDITED BY DAVID CLARKE

UPDATED EDITION

# WHICH VERSION? AUTHORISED OR REVISED

Philip Mauro

A Modern-English Edition

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Published by Bierton Particular Baptists
11 Hayling CLose
Fareham
Hampshire
PO143AE

2026
www.BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

This edition of Philip Mauro's book, Which Version? Authorized or Revised?, proved especially useful at a time when I had decided to return to fellowship with a Christian church after a period of isolation. in 2019. I was seeking to find common scriptural ground with those who desired to worship God, while recognising that differences might remain concerning which version of the Bible should be used and promoted, as well as on other points of doctrine.

At that time, I had recently begun attending Hill Park Baptist Church after a long period of non-attendance, for reasons explained in my book Christ the Rest, Not Moses. During a weeknight Bible study, John Elshaw stated that the New International Version was not a true translation of the Bible, whereas the King James Version was an accurate and reliable translation.

This led to a heated exchange with one of the senior church members, who objected that the New International Version clearly states that it is a translation of the Scriptures.

Although I understood the concern John was seeking to express, I believed that the matter needed to be handled more carefully and explained more precisely.

In my view, the Authorized Version is a genuine and exceptionally influential translation. It follows the traditional Hebrew and Greek textual basis available to its translators, generally preserves more of the wording and structure of the original languages, and retains theological and literary terminology with remarkable consistency.

Nevertheless, like every translation, the Authorized Version occasionally expresses the understood meaning of an original phrase rather than reproducing its form literally. It was also prepared through the careful revision and comparison of earlier English translations with the Hebrew and Greek texts.

It is therefore reasonable to prefer the Authorized Version and to criticise particular readings found in the NIV and other modern translationa. It is also reasonable to reject the principles of modern textual criticism that lie behind the omission or alteration of certain passages in the NIV. However, the stronger allegation—that the NIV is not a translation at all—does not accurately describe the manner in which it was produced.

For this reason, I gave a copy of Which Version? Authorized or Revised? to the church member who had expressed concern, and I also provided a PDF copy to the elders involved. The purpose was to explain more clearly the nature of the problems associated with modern Bible translation and to show why such a statement concerning the NIV might be made, while also encouraging the matter to be addressed accurately, carefully, and without unnecessary contention.

## EDITORIAL NOTE

Philip Mauro, Which Version? Authorised or Revised was written at a time when English prose commonly employed longer sentences, more elaborate constructions, and forms of expression that may now appear unfamiliar to modern readers. The purpose of this edition is to make Mauro, argument more accessible without altering his theology, his conclusions, or the substance and force of his reasoning.

Mauro, own prose has therefore been rendered in clear, contemporary English. Long and complicated sentences have occasionally been divided, obsolete constructions have been replaced with their modern equivalents, and punctuation and paragraphing have been revised where necessary for clarity. Repetition has generally been retained where it contributes to Mauro, emphasis or method of argument.

This is a modernisation rather than an abridgement or reinterpretation. No attempt has been made to moderate Mauro, language, bring his conclusions into conformity with present-day textual criticism, or introduce arguments that he did not make. His first-person plural formwe believe, we shall consider, and similar expressionshas been retained as an important feature of his authorial voice.

Established theological and textual-critical terminology has also been preserved. Terms such as Authorised Version, Revised Version, Received Text, Textus Receptus, original autographs, inspired Writings, Greek Text, ancient Versions, and providential preservation have not been replaced by looser modern expressions.

Biblical quotations have been retained in the wording of the King James Version. This is particularly important in a work whose argument frequently depends upon the precise wording of the

Authorised Version and its differences from the Revised Version. Where Mauro quotes the Revised Version or discusses an alternative Greek reading, the wording under examination has likewise been preserved.

Direct quotations from Dean Burgon, Dr Scrivener, Bishop Ellicott, Westcott and Hort, Tischendorf, and other historical writers have been left substantially in their original form. Only obvious typographical errors, damaged punctuation, and clear defects introduced during scanning or later typesetting have been corrected. The language of such quotations has not been modernised, since doing so would risk attributing to those writers words they did not use.

Obvious printing and transcription errors in the source edition have been silently corrected. These include misspelled personal names, broken words, misplaced punctuation, and incorrect abbreviations such as B.V. or E.V. where the context plainly requires R.V. No attempt, however, has been made to correct or revise Mauro, historical, bibliographical, or textual-critical claims merely because subsequent scholarship may assess them differently. They are presented as part of Mauro, own argument.

The chapter order, principal headings, subordinate divisions, and progression of argument have been preserved. Some headings have been regularised for consistency, but no new divisions have been introduced that materially alter the structure of the work.

Scripture references have been standardised in the form Matthew 5:44, Luke 23:34, and 1 Timothy 3:16. References supplied by Mauro are retained, while biblical allusions are not converted into formal references unless the passage was clearly identified in the original text.

The original footnotes have been retained and standardised. Where a note contains Mauro, own extended argument, its wording has been modernised according to the same principles applied to the main text. Bibliographical titles and historical quotations within the notes remain substantially unchanged.

The guiding principle throughout has been simple: to modernise the language, but not the theology; to clarify the expression, but not to reconstruct the argument; and to allow Philip Mauro to continue

## Contents

**EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION** **3**

**CHAPTER I** **11**

*The Several English Versions*

**CHAPTER II** **18**

*The Various Greek Texts*

**CHAPTER III** **25**

*The Ancient Codices: The Vatican And Sinaitic Manuscripts*

**CHAPTER IV** **28**

*Characteristics Of The Two Oldest Manuscripts*

**CHAPTER V** **36**

*The Principle Of Ancient Evidence Only Examined*

**CHAPTER VI** **47**

*The Procedure Of The Revision Committee*

**CHAPTER VII** **51**

*Specific Examples Of Textual Corruption*

**CHAPTER VIII** **59**

*Changes In Translation*

**CHAPTER IX** **65**

*The Use Made Of The Margin In The Revised Version*

**CHAPTER X** **69**

*The Theory Of Westcott And Hort*

**FURTHER PUBLICATIONS** **83**

**CHRIST THE REST, NOT MOSES** **83**

**CONVERTED ON LSD TRIP** **84**

**TROJAN WARRIORS** **86**

**DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION** **87**

speaking in his own voice.

## THE PURPOSE

The purpose of this book is to present information concerning the Authorised and Revised Versions of the New Testament. This information should be known by every Bible reader, but in our day it is known by comparatively few.

Our present inquiry concerns the many differencessome of them quite seriousbetween the Authorised, or King James, Version, first published in 1611, and the Revised Version of 1881. The total number of departures in the latter from the former exceeds thirty-six thousand.

## THIS RAISES SOME SERIOUS QUESTIONS

Why were so many changes made? By what authority were they made? What is their general character and effect? In brief, have they given us a better Versionone that brings us nearer to the original autographs of the inspired Writings? And is the Authorised Version really so defective as such an enormous number of corrections would imply?

This is not only a matter of the greatest importance; it is also one on which the ordinary Bible reader will naturally wish to form a well-grounded opinion. To do so, he must have some knowledge of the relevant facts. The expertstextual critics, editors, and Greek scholarsdiffer and dispute among themselves, while their discussions and dissertations abound in matters so technical and obscure that ordinary readers cannot follow them. Consequently, the conflicting opinions of the experts often serve only to make the subject more confusing to the general reader.

The relevant facts themselves are not difficult to understand, but they are inaccessible to most Bible readers. We have therefore written these pages chiefly to present the facts concerning the two rival Versions, the sources from which they were respectively derived, and the circumstances surrounding the production of the Revised Version. These facts formed the basis of the writer, own judgment.

They are not only supremely important but deeply interesting. We are not, therefore, inviting the reader to a dry or tedious discussion, but to an inquiry of lively and absorbing interest.

There is, of course, a difference of opinion as to which of the two

Versions of the English Bible is better. Those who favour the modern Version point out that, during the three hundred years that elapsed after the Authorised Version was translated, much material was discovered that cast additional light upon the Text. They also refer to the advancement made in every department of learning and to the fact that the Revised Version was the result of the labours of eminent scholars who devoted ten years to its production.

All this is true. Other general facts of a similar kind could also be mentioned, all of which prepared English-speaking people throughout the world to receive the new Version favourably.

How is it, then, that the King James Version has not only maintained its place of supremacy, but in later years has moved further and further ahead of its rival? This is surely a matter worthy of thoughtful consideration.

Before we begin to examine that question, however, we wish briefly to direct the reader, attention to certain facts of great importance concerning the Holy Scriptures in general and the English Bible in particular.

## THE BIBLE AS A FACTOR OF CIVILISATION

Everything concerning the Bibleand particularly every proposed change to the Bible as it has long existed in the English languageis a matter of great consequence to all men, whether they realise it or not.

It is beyond dispute that the Bible has been the chief factor in the formation of Western civilisation and also the chief factor in its preservation. Its unique influence upon individual lives, together with the standards of justice and morality it has set before the people, has helped to withstand the powerful disruptive forces of lawlessness and anarchy by which the very existence of society has always been threatenedand perhaps more seriously now than ever before.

The influence of the Bible has contributed, and continues to contribute, far more than all other forces combined to the maintenance of government and to the preservation of those principles of law, customs, practices, ethical standards, education, and family life that promote the welfare of nations, communities, and individuals.

This may be asserted without fear of contradiction. Even so determined an enemy of Christianity as Mr H. G. Wells acknowledged

that civilisation owed both its origin and its preservation to the Bible. He declared in print that:

The civilisation we possess could not have come into existence, and could not have been sustained, without it.

He also admitted that:

It is the Book that has held together the fabric of Western civilisation.

He further stated that it had unified and held together great masses of people and had been:

The handbook of life to countless millions of men and women.

It had, he said, explained the world to the mass of the people and had given them moral standards and a form within which their consciences could operate.

This testimony is all the more valuable because it comes from one of the most prominent enemies of the faith that rests upon the Bible. We cannot understand how any man capable of grasping the facts admitted by Mr Wells could fail to see that a Book which has, throughout centuries, accomplished results so vast in extent and so excellent in character must be of superhuman origin.

The facts which Mr Wells and other unbelievers are compelled to admit concerning the influence of the Biblethe extent, duration, and, above all, the character of that influence among the peoples of the worldcannot be asserted, even in a small measure, of any other book.

Thus, in these outstanding facts, which even the enemies of Christ are constrained to acknowledge, we have sufficient proof of the Divine authorship of the Holy Scriptures.

## THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH

For our present purpose, however, we wish particularly to emphasise that when reference is made to the Bible and its influence, what is meant in most cases is the English Version of the Bible.

The undeniable fact is that the English Version of the Scriptures is the Bible to most of those who read or consult the Holy Scriptures. The English Version has also served as the basis for translations of the Scriptures into many other languages and dialects.

From these facts, which are matters of common knowledge, it follows that whatever affects the English Version of the Bible is of the highest consequence to people throughout the world, even if we

restrict ourselves to matters concerning their temporal welfare.

It therefore becomes all of us who have at heart the purposes for which God has given us His Holy Word to acquaint ourselves, as far as we are able, with the merits of the several English Versions. We should seek to form an intelligent and well-grounded opinion as to which of these Versions, considered as a whole, is best fitted to accomplish the purposes of God and to promote the welfare of human beings, both for time and for eternity.

For the original suggestion of writing this book, and for some of the material contained in it, I am indebted to a pamphlet entitled The Revised Version, by L. E. B., published by Elliot Stock, London.

## CHAPTER I

### *The Several English Versions*

The common Version of the Holy Bible in the English language is more than three hundred years old, having first appeared in 1611. It is sometimes called the King James Version, but is more commonly known as the Authorised Version. It is usually designated by the letters A.V.

In 1881, a new English Version of the Bible appeared, and a second and final edition was issued in 1885. This Version was the result of the labours of a Revision Committee composed of English and American scholars who were well acquainted with the original languages. The work of the Revision Committee extended over a period of ten years. This Version is usually designated by the letters R.V.

Twenty years later, in 1901, another Version was published in the United States. It incorporated the readings preferred by the American members of the Revision Committee and is known as the American Standard Version, designated by the letters A.S.V.

There are many differences between these two modern Versions, both of which resulted from the labours of the Revision Committee. [1] For example, in the American Version the name LORD is changed throughout the Old Testament to JEHOVAH, which is the recognised English equivalent of the Hebrew original. We regard this change as a great improvement.

We shall not, however, discuss in this book the differences

between the two modern Versions.

It should also be stated at the outset that our observations will be confined to the New Testament. The reason is that the differences of major importance found in the Revised Versions of the New Testamentand their importance is in some cases very great indeedare not merely differences of translation. They arise from differences in the Greek Text used as the basis of the translation.

The Text adopted by the Revisers of the nineteenth century differs in many particulars from that which, three centuries earlier, served as the basis of the Authorised Version.

In the case of the Old Testament, however, the same Hebrew Text served as the basis of both Versions. The changes made by the Revisers in the Old Testament are therefore changes of translation only. It is comparatively easy for anyone, with the assistance of a Hebrew concordance, to form an opinion concerning the different translations of a passage.

When the original Text itself has been changed, however, the ordinary reader has no means of judging whether the alteration was justified.

## THE OCCASION FOR THE REVISED VERSION

The Bible is the one Book in the world that is constantly subjected to scrutiny. The examination it receives is of the most searching kind and is undertaken by some of the keenest and best-equipped minds in the world. This, by the way, is another strong, though indirect, proof that the Bible is not merely a human book.

This continuous and microscopic examination of the Bible, and of all the circumstances and conditions connected with the origin of its various parts, has been carried on both by its friends, who value every item of information they can gather concerning it, and by its enemies, who are relentless in their search for facts that might be used to discredit its statements or challenge its accuracy.

This unceasing scrutiny extends not only to every word of the original Text, but also to the smallest questions of prefixes, terminations, spelling, verbal tenses, and even such minute matters as the placing of an accent.

It would seem that every generation of men has been compelled, as though by some powerful but mysterious influence, to recognise

the importance of every jot and tittle of this Book of books.

As a result of this constant and painstaking study of the Scriptures during the centuries following the appearance of the Authorised Version, it became increasingly clear that, notwithstanding the excellencies of that great and admirable work, there were particular places in which, for one reason or another, it admitted ofand indeed called forcorrection.

Those who translated it were godly and learned men. We do not doubt that they were assisted in large measure by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, they were human and therefore compassed with infirmity.

Moreover, during the years following the completion of their work, discoveries were made that affected the original Text of the New Testament. Other discoveries cast fresh light upon the meaning of obscure words and difficult passages. It was also found that corrections in translation were needed in certain places, particularly with regard to the tenses of verbs.

In addition to all this, account had to be taken of the factfor which the translators of the Authorised Version were in no way responsiblethat changes had occurred in the meanings of a number of English words and expressions.

For all these reasons, it appeared desirable that our excellent and justly admired Authorised Version should undergo the kind of revision for which the Revision Committee was appointed in 1871.

It should be clearly understood that those responsible for appointing that Committee contemplated nothing more than a revision of the Version of 1611. Had the Committee confined itself to the task actually entrusted to it and remained within the limits of its instructions, the result of its long labours would undoubtedly have been a gain and a blessing to all the English-speaking nations and, through them, to all mankind.

Instead of producing a Revised Version of the long-accepted English Bible, however, the Committee brought forthat least as far as the New Testament was concerneda new Version.

This fact was not disclosed by the Revisers. The Preface to the edition of 1885 gives no indication of it. Nevertheless, through the vigilance of certain godly and learned men, particularly Dean

Burgon, the important fact was discerned and brought to light that the Committee had produced, not a Revised Version, though that was the name given to it, but a new Version translated from a New Greek Text.

The importance of this fact will become evident as we proceed.

It will also be of considerable interest to show the sources from which this New Greek Text was derived and the means by which its adoption by the Committeea matter surrounded by considerable mystery at the timewas brought about.

## THE PRESENT SITUATION

More than forty years have now passed since the Revised Version appearedthe Scriptural period of full probation. As we consider the existing situation in the year 1924, the most conspicuous fact before us is that the new Version, in either or both of its forms, has not superseded the Authorised Version. Nor is there the slightest indication that it will ever do so.

Indeed, it appears that the Revised Version is declining rather than increasing in favour among Bible users of every class, from the most learned to the least educated.[2]

This is a fact of great significance, and it should receive due consideration in any attempt to form a just estimate of the relative value of the rival Versions.

How is this fact to be explained?

It is not because the old Version did not and does not admit of corrections and improvements. Nor is it because the Revisers failed to make any such improvements, for it cannot be denied that the Revised Version contains many improved readings.

Nevertheless, the experience of an entire generation has now conclusively demonstrated that the Authorised Version retains, and will in all probability continue to retain, its long-undisputed place as the standard English Bible.

The failure of either of the new Versions to displace the old is attributed by some to the supposed conservatism of the general public and to an assumed reluctance to accept change of any kind. We believe, however, that the truth is rather that people in our time are excessively ready, and even eager, to welcome every kind of change.

Radical innovation is the order of the day. On every side we see

the old being discarded in favour of the new and the up-to-date. In no department of human affairs is this eagerness for change more evident than in the field of literatureif that word may properly be applied to much of what people now read.

Moreover, the generation of those who had known only the Authorised Version, and who might therefore have been inclined to cling to it for that reason alone, has now passed away.

The fact before us is that, whereas those living in the years 1881 to 1885 appeared ready and willing to welcome the Revised Version, fully expecting it to be a genuine improvement upon the older Version, the almost unanimous judgment of the succeeding generation is that the older Version is to be preferred.

Looking beyond and above the sphere of merely human judgment, and recognising the superintendence of the Spirit of God in all that concerns the Word of God, we believe ourselves warranted in concluding from the facts stated above that there are Divine reasons for the Authorised Version, continuing favour among the people of God.

We shall therefore endeavour to point out some of those reasons.

## THE ORIGINAL TEXT

Very few of those who read the Scriptures have any idea how much depends upon the all-important matter of determining the Greek Text of the New Testament, or how numerous and serious are the difficulties involved in doing so.

Of those who give any thought to the subject, the greater number seem to suppose that there exists somewhere an acknowledged original Text of the New Testament and that the preparation of an English Version is therefore merely a matter of correctly translating that Greek Text.

The actual situation is very different.

The first part of the work is to determine the Greek Text from which the translation is to be made. This is a matter of immense difficulty because the original materials from which the Text must be constructed include more than a thousand manuscripts.

Some of these contain the whole, or nearly the whole, of the New Testament. The remainder contain only parts of it, some containing more and others less.

A few of these manuscripts are believed to date from as early as the fourth or fifth century, while others are as late as the fourteenth century.

There are also certain ancient Versions, or translations, such as the Latin, Syriac, and Coptic, whose testimony concerning disputed passages must be considered. They are especially important because some of them are older than the earliest Greek manuscripts known to exist at the present time.

The most notable of these is the Peshitta, or Syriac Version, which dates from a very early period in the Christian era, probably from the second century.

The original materials available for constructing a Greek Text also include the numerous quotations from Scripture found in the extensive writings of the church fathers that have survived to our day.

This is an important source of information. Those quotations are so numerous, and together cover so much of the New Testament, that the greater part of its entire Text could be reconstructed from them alone.

Yet no two of these thousands of manuscripts are exactly alike. Every discrepancy raises a separate question that requires individual investigation and decision.

Although the precise reading of thousands of passages is affected by these differences, it must not be supposed that there is any uncertainty concerning the teaching and testimony of the New Testament as a whole.

The reassuring facts are these:

1. The overwhelming majority of variant readings are so slightoften involving only a single letter, an accent, a prefix, or the ending of a wordthat they raise no question concerning the true meaning of the passage.

2. All the variant readings taken together provide no ground for the slightest doubt concerning any of the fundamental points of faith and doctrine.

In other words, even the worst Text that could be constructed from the abundant materials available would not overthrow any of the great truths of the Christian faith.

It will therefore be understood that the preparation of a Greek Text, as the first stage in producing an English Version, involves the immense labour of examining, for every disputed word and passage, the numerous manuscripts, ancient Versions, and quotations known to exist. It also requires a decision to be made in every case where there is conflict among the various witnesses.

This is a highly complicated task, and its proper performance requires qualities other than scholarship in Greek and English.

At the outset, for example, it is necessary to decide what degree of credibility should be assigned to the respective manuscripts. It is here, in our judgment, that the compilers of the Greek Text used as the basis of the Revised Version went seriously astray. The result was that the Text they adopted was much inferior to that used in the translation of the Authorised Version.

Our reasons for this opinion, which will be given later, are not difficult to understand.

It is important in this connection to observe that no amount of care in translation can correct defects in the original Text. On the contrary, the more faithful the translation is, the more effectively the errors of the Text will be carried into the resulting Version.

## THE REVISION COMMITTEE WAS NOT INSTRUCTED TO FASHION A NEW GREEK TEXT

It should also be observed that the instructions under which the Revisers acted did not contemplate the creation of a New Greek Text. Nor did the members of the Committee possess the qualifications required for so complicated a task.

We venture to predict that the reader will be astonished when he learns, as we intend to show later, the method by which that New Greek Text was fashioned.

At present, however, we merely direct attention to the fact that the Committee was instructed to undertake:

A Revision of the Authorised Version
with a view to:
the removal of plain and clear errors.

Its first rule was:

To introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorised.

This prompts us to ask: if thirty-six thousand alterations were the fewest possible for the Revisers to introduce, what would they have done had they been given an entirely free hand?

## THE WORK OF TRANSLATION

Furthermore, we believe it can be clearly shown that the work of translation in the Revised Version is, as a whole, greatly inferior to that of the Authorised Version.

This remains true notwithstanding the many improved readings found in the Revised Version. Indeed, one competent authority characterised the later Version as containing bad English everywhere.

## THE HEBREW TEXT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

As already stated, the difficulties associated with the Greek Text of the New Testament do not arise in the same way in connection with the Old Testament, whose original language is Hebrew.

There is only one standard Hebrew Text, known as the Massoretic Text, which is recognised by both Jewish and Christian authorities as the true Text of the Hebrew Scriptures.

# CHAPTER II

*The Various Greek Texts*

We have spoken briefly of the difficulties that must be faced by those who undertake to compile a Greek Text of the New Testament from the scattered and differing original sources.

Nevertheless, this great task has been undertaken by able scholars at various times. As a result of their labours, several complete Greek Texts are now in existence. We shall give a brief account of the most important of them.

## STEPHENS (A.D. 1550)

The Text of Stephens served as the basis of the Authorised Version.

In preparing it, the compiler was guided largely, though not exclusively, by comparatively late manuscripts dating from the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, which had been used in various churches throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa.

It might be supposed that Stephens was at a disadvantage compared with later compilers because he did not have access to

certain manuscripts, particularly the Vatican and Sinaitic Codices, which were available to such later editors as Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort.

The fact is, howeverand this we hope to make quite clearthat the comparative excellence of the Text of Stephens, and also of the Elzevir or Textus Receptus, is due in no small measure to the fact that the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts were not consulted in its preparation.

The comparatively late manuscripts from which the Stephens and Elzevir Texts were chiefly compiled were, of course, copies of older manuscripts that had eventually worn out. Those older manuscripts were themselves copies of others still more ancient.

Throughout this repeated process of copying, the various errors to which copyists are liable would inevitably have entered the Text. In some instances, alterations were also made deliberately for one reason or another.

When an error entered a particular copy, or was intentionally introduced into it, that error would naturally be repeated in later copies made from it. In this way, variations from the original would tend to multiply.

There was, however, a check upon this tendency.

Such reverence was shown towards the sacred Text, and such a strong desire existed that the copies used in the churches should remain pure, that every opportunity would be taken to compare one Text with another. Where differences were found, an inquiry would naturally be made to establish the true reading.

Thus, by examining and comparing a moderate numberperhaps ten or twentyof comparatively late manuscripts obtained from widely separated regions, it would be possible to establish almost with certainty the original reading of any disputed passage.

Where the authenticity of an entire passage was questioned, the same method would make it possible to determine whether it was genuine Scripture.

## ELZEVIR, OR THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS (1624)

This edition, with which the name and reputation of the great Erasmus are associated, has for centuries been, and still remains, the best known and most widely used of all the Greek Texts.

Although this justly celebrated edition appeared some years after the publication of the Authorised Version, the differences between it and its immediate predecessor, the Stephens edition, are so few and insignificant that, for all practical purposes, the two may be regarded as one and the same.

Thus, all the scholarship supporting the Textus Receptus also supports the Text that served as the basis for the translation of our Authorised Version.

From what has already been said, it is apparent that if the Revisers of the nineteenth century had used the same Greek Texteither exactly as it stood or with such corrections as later discoveries appeared to justifythey would have produced a Version containing comparatively few altered readings.

Indeed, it is reasonable to say that if the Revisers had simply provided a corrected translation of the Textus Receptus, instead of translating an entirely New Greek Text, we should have had only a small fractionperhaps less than ten per centof the changes found in the Revised Version.

More importantly, none of the changes regarded as serious, and against which such a storm of protest was raised by men of the highest scholarship and deepest piety, would have been made.

In that case, it is also likely that the alterations would have commended themselves to the majority of careful and discerning Bible readers.

We should therefore pay close attention to the principles adopted and the materials used in compiling the later Greek Texts of the New Testament. We shall now speak briefly of the most important of these.

## GRIESBACH, EDITION (1805)

This Text appeared approximately one hundred and fifty years after the Elzevir edition.

During the intervening period, an enormous quantity of new material had been collected and was available to assist in the effort to recover the true original reading.

The increased body of evidence, however, made the work of examination more laborious. It also repeatedly raised the difficult question of the relative credibility of witnesses whose testimony was in conflict.

In compiling his Text, Griesbach followed a plan and principles of his own, which need not be described here.

In doubtful and difficult cases, he appears generally to have followed the Textus Receptus. His departures from it were therefore not serious. In any case, his Text is not now regarded as possessing any special authority.

## LACHMANN (1842,1850)

Lachmann appears to have been the first editor to act upon the theory that the more ancient a manuscript is, the more worthy it is of belief.

It is extraordinary how far this principle has been allowed to control decisions concerning disputed readings, without proper regard to other weighty considerations by which the credibility of conflicting witnesses ought to have been determined.

This matter requires special attention, not only because of the important part this principle played in establishing the Text of the Revised Version, but also because it appears to be widely assumed that, whenever testimony conflicts, the older manuscript must necessarily be the more trustworthy.

We therefore propose to examine this rule of evidence carefully at a later stage. In doing so, we shall endeavour to show why we believe that the principles governing the compilation of the Textus Receptus conform much more closely to sound rules of evidence, and are therefore more likely to lead to correct conclusions, than the principle adopted by Lachmann and his successors.

Lachmann appears to have developed a prejudiced dislike of the Received Text. As one competent authority expressed it, he:

set to work to form a text independent of that, right or wrong.

He began with the theory of:

ancient evidence only,

and in doing so swept aside many copies and much evidence simply because they fell outside the period he had fixed.

Indeed, his object was not to recover the original inspired Writings, but merely:

to recover the Text as it was in the fourth century.

This principle, first adopted by Lachmann and later followed with almost disastrous results by his successorsincluding Drs Westcott

and Hort, who were responsible for the Text underlying the Revised Versionrested upon the unspoken assumption that there existed in the fourth century a Greek Text that was both generally accepted and substantially pure.

It is now recognised, however, that some of the worst corruptions of the original Writings occurred before that time.

Furthermore, when the Revised Version appeared, Drs Westcott and Hort published an elaborate explanation of the principles they had followed in preparing their New Greek Text. Until then, that Text had been privately circulated among the Revisers under strict instructions of secrecy.

In their explanation, Westcott and Hort admitted that the Textus Receptus is substantially identical with the Text used in the churches of Syria and elsewhere during, and even before, the fourth century.

We shall return to this important feature of the case in greater detail later. It shows that the authors of the Text adopted by the Revisers appealed to the principle of ancient evidence as the justification for departing from the Received Text, while making admissions that indicate they had in fact acted contrary to that very principle.

Concerning the assumption that a Text or manuscript dating from the fourth century must therefore be purer than one of later date, we quote the statement of a man generally regarded as the ablest textual critic of his time.

Dr Frederick H. A. Scrivener, in his Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, third edition, page 511, wrote:

It is no less true to fact than paradoxical in sound that the worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subjected originated within a hundred years after it was composed; that Irenaeus and the African Fathers, and the whole Western church, with a portion of the Syrian, had far inferior manuscripts to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephens, thirteen centuries later, when moulding the Textus Receptus.

Lachmann proceeded without regard to this fact, and no doubt in ignorance of it.

He thus established a harmful precedent. Unfortunately, his example was followed by later editorsmen unquestionably possessing great learning and an accurate knowledge of early Greek,

but apparently having little knowledge of the history of the various Greek manuscripts and no proper understanding of the laws of evidence or of the method required to investigate a large body of conflicting testimony.

## TISCHENDORF (1865,1872)

This scholar, whose great abilities and tireless labours are widely recognised, exercised a dominant influence upon the formation of the modern Text.

Tischendorf described his method in the following words:

The text is to be sought only from ancient evidence, and especially from Greek manuscripts, but without neglecting the testimonies of Versions and Fathers.

From this statement, we see that Tischendorf committed himself fully to the principle of giving ancient evidence the deciding voice in every disputed reading.

His adoption of this principle was particularly unfortunate because Tischendorf himself discovered the famous Codex Sinaiticus, concerning which we shall have more to say later.

This manuscript is believed to be the second oldest surviving Greek manuscript of the New Testament and, according to the principle just described, would therefore be entitled to an exceptionally high degree of credibility.

Whether the Sinaitic manuscript is in fact among the most ancient now known to exist, it is, beyond any doubt, one of the most defective, corrupt, and unreliable.

Our reasons for this assertion, which are sufficient to establish it, will be presented later.

At this point, we wish merely to observeleaving the proof for a later chapterthat the most serious of the many departures of the Revised Version from the Authorised Version resulted from the unfortunate combination of an unsound principle of evidence and the accidental discovery, by a scholar committed to that principle, of a very ancient Greek manuscript of the New Testament.

Despite its unquestioned antiquity, that manuscript proves to be among the worst and most scandalously corrupt Greek Texts known to exist.

## TREGELLES

Tregelles was a contemporary of Tischendorf.

He stated that his purpose was:

to give the text on the authority of the oldest manuscripts and Versions, and with the aid of the earlier citations, so as to present, so far as possible, the text commonly received in the fourth century.

It will be observed that this was substantially the same plan as that proposed by Lachmann.

These were the precedents that appear chiefly to have influenced Westcott and Hort in compiling their Text, which is virtually the Text from which the Revised Version was translated.

Dr Scrivener wrote:

Lachmann, text seldom rests on more than four Greek Codices, very often on three, not infrequently on two, sometimes on only one.

Lachmann, error, which Tregelles adopted, necessarily proved fatal to the Text prepared by the latter.

In practice, Tregelles proceeded upon the astonishing assumption that eighty-nine ninetieths of the existing manuscripts and other authorities might safely be rejected, leaving him free to follow a small number of early documents of doubtful reputation.

This movement in the wrong direction developed still further under Tischendorf and reached its fullest expression in Westcott and Hort, who were permitted to fashion the Greek Text of the Revised Version according to their own principles.

ALFORD

Alford, work followed that of Tischendorf and Tregelles.

He is highly regarded as a Greek scholar, though we do not know how competent he was to decide questions of fact where the available testimony was in conflict.

Referring to the work of Tischendorf and Tregelles, Alford wrote:

If Tischendorf has run into a fault on the side of speculative hypotheses concerning the origins of readings found in those manuscripts, it must be confessed that Tregelles has sometimes erred on the certainly far safer side of scrupulous adherence to the more literal evidence of the ancient manuscripts.

Alford stated that his own Text was constructed:

by following in all ordinary cases the united or preponderating testimony of the most ancient authorities.

He considered later evidence only when:

the most ancient authorities did not agree or preponderate.

It seems not to have occurred to this learned man, any more than to the others, that mere antiquity is not a safe test of reliability where witnesses conflict, and that a later copy of a correct original ought to be preferred to a corrupt manuscript of earlier date.

## CHAPTER III

*The Ancient Codices: The Vatican And Sinaitic Manuscripts*

This brings us to the consideration of those ancient manuscripts, or codices,[3] as they are commonly called, to which modern editors have attributed such a high degree of credibility.

We shall give particular attention to the two most ancient surviving witnesses to the sacred Text: the Codex Vaticanus, so called because it is preserved in the papal palace at Rome, and the Codex Sinaiticus, so called because Tischendorf discovered it in a monastery on Mount Sinai.

From the character of their writing and other internal evidence, these manuscripts are believed to date from the fourth century. The next oldest surviving manuscripts are generally assigned to the fifth century.

According to the widely accepted theory already discussed, the testimony of these two Codices should therefore be regarded as decisive wherever disputed readings occur.

The Revisers of 1881 accordingly committed themselves to the guidance of these two ancient witnesses.

Did those witnesses lead them towards the true Text of the inspired Writings, or away from it?

This is the deeply important question we now propose to examine.

In addition to the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, three other very ancient manuscripts deserve mention:

1. Codex Alexandrinus. This manuscript has long been preserved in the British Museum in London. It contains all four Gospels, apart from small portions of Matthew and John, and the remainder of the New Testament except 2 Corinthians 4:13,12:6. It is generally dated to the fifth century.

2. Codex Ephraemi. This manuscript is preserved in Paris. It

contains portions of the Gospels, Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation. It is generally dated to the fifth century.

3. Codex Bezae. This manuscript is preserved at Cambridge, England. It contains nearly all the Gospels, together with portions of Acts, but no other part of the New Testament. It is generally dated to the sixth century. It has a very poor reputation, as Dean Burgon fully demonstrated, and no editor appears to attach much importance to it.

## THE DISCOVERY OF THE MOUNT SINAI MANUSCRIPT

This famous Codex, together with facsimiles of its handwriting and an account of its discovery, was published in full in Dr Scrivener, work entitled A Full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus in 1864.

Constantine Tischendorf, a distinguished German scholar who devoted himself tirelessly to the search for ancient manuscripts, visited a monastery on Mount Sinai in 1844.

During that visit, he happened one day to discover among some discarded material a number of vellum leaves. Upon examination, they were found to contain portions of the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, written in a script indicating that the manuscript was of great antiquity.

Describing his famous discovery, Tischendorf wrote:

I perceived in the middle of the great hall a large and wide basket, full of old parchments; and the librarian informed me that two heaps of papers like this, mouldered by reason of age, had been already committed to the flames. What was my surprise to find among this heap of documents a considerable number of sheets of a copy of the Old Testament in Greek, which seemed to me to be one of the most ancient I had ever seen.

The monks allowed him to take forty-five of the leaves.

Nothing further occurred until fifteen years later, when Tischendorf again visited the monastery, this time under the direct patronage of the Czar of Russia.

On that occasion, he was shown a large roll of parchment leaves. Among manuscripts of lesser importance, it contained the Codex now known as the Sinaitic.

Naturally, Dr Tischendorf was greatly excited by his discovery. Indeed, his enthusiasm was without limit.

He declared:

I knew that I held in my hands the most precious Biblical treasure in existence.

He considered the discovery greater than that of the Koh-i-Noor diamond belonging to the Queen of England.

As often happens in such cases, this important discovery created great excitement, particularly among those devoted to the study of antiquity.

We are all familiar with the human tendency to exaggerate the importance of every new discovery. Examples of this kind continually appear.

The discovery of the tomb of an Egyptian king may be treated as a matter of supreme interest to the whole world. Even trivial details relating to it are communicated by cable to distant countries and given prominence in the daily newspapers.

An ancient object recently recovered from the ruins of a long-buried city may create a wave of excitement throughout the world, while an identical object known to have existed for many years would be treated with complete indifference.

We need not therefore be surprised that this eminent scholar was carried away by his accidental discovery or that he succeeded in impressing upon others his own estimate of the extraordinary importance of what he had found.

Dean Burgon, speaking of Tischendorf and his discovery, aptly remarked:

Happy in having discovered, in 1859, an uncial Codex second in antiquity only to the oldest before known, the Vatican Codex, and strongly resembling that famous fourth-century Codex, he suffered his judgment to be overpowered by the circumstance. He at once remodelled his seventh editionthat is, the seventh edition of his Greek Text of the New Testamentin 3,505 places, to the scandal of the Science of Comparative Criticism, as well as to his own grave discredit for discernment and consistency.

It is evident, therefore, that Tischendorf was overwhelmed by the personal influence of his discovery.

He immediately surrendered his judgment to this particular manuscript, readily persuading himself that, because of its apparent

antiquity and without proper regard to other considerations, it must necessarily be correct wherever it differed from later manuscripts.

Having fully committed himself to that view, he naturally continued to adhere to it.

Unfortunately, however, the weight of his great influence affected the entire school of Comparative Textual Criticism.

Dean Burgon continued:

But in fact the infatuation which prevails to this hour, in this department of sacred science, can only be spoken of as incredible.

He then proceeded, through evidence occupying many pages, to show:

that the one distinctive tenet of the three most famous critics since 1831Lachmann, Tregelles, and Tischendorfhas been a superstitious reverence for what is found in the same little handful of early, but not the earliest, nor yet of necessity the purest, documents.

In this connection, it should always be remembered that those editors who profess to accept as their controlling principle the testimony of the most ancient manuscripts have not acted consistently with that principle.

The fact is that, in compiling their Greek Texts, they did not truly follow the most ancient manuscripts. They were chiefly controlled by only two manuscripts.

Those two were followed even against the combined evidence of all the other available manuscripts, numbering more than a thousand, some of which were almost equally ancient. They were also followed against the evidence of early Versions and quotations from the writings of fathers who lived long before the production of those two Codices.

We shall return to this important feature of the subject later.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Characteristics Of The Two Oldest Manuscripts*

The principle adopted by modern editorsthat the oldest manuscripts should be followed in settling every doubtful or disputed readingdirects us chiefly to two Codices: Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

Although neither manuscript bears a date, competent antiquarians generally assign both to the fourth century. The practical effect of

the principle of ancient evidence only is therefore to make these two solitary survivors of the first four Christian centuries the final authorities wherever they agreewhich is by no means always the caseon questions concerning the true Text of Scripture.

It is therefore necessary for us to inquire with the utmost care into the character of these two ancient witnesses and to consider every available fact by which their trustworthiness may be tested.

This inquiry is necessary regardless of the opinion we may hold concerning the principle of ancient evidence itself, which we propose to examine later.

The fact presently before us is that these two fourth-century Codices exercised the deciding influence in settling the Greek Text of the Revised Version. They are responsible for practically all the departures from the Received Text to which serious objection has been made.

Canon Cook, in his authoritative work The Revised Version of the First Three Gospels, wrote:

The two oldest manuscripts are responsible for nearly all the readings which we have brought under considerationreadings which, when we look at them individually, and still more when we regard them collectively, inflict most grievous damage upon our Lord, words and works.

He also wrote:

By far the greatest number of innovations, including those which give the severest shocks to our minds, are adopted on the testimony of two manuscripts, or even of one manuscript, against the distinct testimony of all other manuscripts, uncial and cursive. . . . The Vatican Codex, sometimes alone, but generally in accord with the Sinaitic, is responsible for nine-tenths of the most striking innovations in the Revised Version.

Dean Burgon had a thorough command of the entire subject. After spending five and a half years laboriously collating the five old uncial manuscripts throughout the Gospels, he declared at the completion of that immense task:

So manifest are the disfigurements jointly and exclusively exhibited by the two codices, Vatican and Sinaitic, that, instead of accepting them as two independent witnesses to the inspired original, we are

constrained to regard them as little more than a single reproduction of one and the same scandalously corrupt and comparatively late copy.

## THE MANY CORRECTIONS OF THE SINAITIC MANUSCRIPT

Turning first to the Codex Sinaiticus, we wish to emphasise a matter which, in our judgment, has a decisive bearing upon the all-important question of its trustworthiness.

We are particularly concerned to impress this matter upon the reader because, despite its controlling importance, it has been almost entirely ignored in the discussions of the subject that have come under our notice.

The fact to which we refer is that, from the time this document was first written, it became the subject of no fewer than ten separate attempts at revision and correction.

The existence of these different attempts is shown by the distinct handwriting of the various revisers. The centuries in which the corrections were made can also be approximately determined from the character of the handwriting in which the different sets of alterations were carried out.

In 1864, Dr Scrivener published A Full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus, together with an explanatory introduction. In it he stated, among other matters of interest:

The Codex is covered with such alterationsthat is, alterations of an obviously corrective characterbrought in by at least ten different revisers, some of them systematically spread over every page, others occasional, or limited to separate portions of the manuscript, many of these being contemporaneous with the first writer, but for the greater part belonging to the sixth or seventh century.

We are confident that every intelligent reader will readily recognise the immense significance of this feature of the Sinaitic Codex.

Here is a document which the Revisers esteemedsolely because of its antiquityto be so pure that it should serve as a standard by which all other copies of Scripture were tested and corrected. Such was the judgment of certain scholars of the nineteenth century.

Yet the manuscript itself bears clear evidence that those who possessed it from the beginning, and for several centuries afterwards,

considered it so impure that it required correction throughout.

A manuscript of this kind, written on vellum of the finest quality, would have been of great value to its owner. Its possessor would naturally have been reluctant to permit alterations unless the need for them was obvious.

It is therefore evident that this much-admired Codex bears upon its face incontestable proof of its corrupt and defective character.

There is more.

Dr Scrivener tells us that the evident purpose of the extensive revision which he assigns to the sixth or seventh century was to bring the manuscript into agreement with copies then in general use, copies which were:

far nearer to our modern Textus Receptus.

The evidential value of these repeated efforts to correct the Sinaitic Codex, and especially of the plainly discernible purpose of the most extensive of those revisions, is very great.

According to every sound rule and principle of evidence, this ancient witness, far from creating doubt concerning the trustworthiness and textual purity of the Received Text, should be regarded as providing strong confirmation of it.

From these facts we therefore draw two conclusions.

First, the impurity of the Codex Sinaiticus in every part was fully recognised by those best acquainted with it, from its earliest days until it was finally discarded as unsuitable for practical use.

Second, the Text then recognised as the standard by which this defective Codex was corrected was one that agreed with our Textus Receptus.

It is remarkable that facts which so profoundly affect the evidential value of the Codex Sinaiticusfacts which, in effect, change it from a hostile witness into a friendly one so far as the Received Text is concernedshould have been so completely disregarded.

## THE WORK OF AN INCOMPETENT SCRIBE

There are other characteristics of this ancient manuscript which must also be considered if we are to form a correct estimate of its evidential value.

Internal evidence leads to the conclusion that it was the work of a scribe who was remarkably careless, incompetent, or both.

The arrangement of the lines in the manuscript is unusual. Each page contains four columns, and each line contains approximately twelve letters, all written in capitals and without spaces between the words.

No attempt is made to finish a word at the end of a line. Even words containing only two letters are sometimes divided, with the final letter carried to the beginning of the next line, although there was sufficient space for it in the preceding line.

This and other peculiarities give us some indication of the character and competence of the scribe.

But there is more.

Dr Scrivener wrote:

This manuscript must have been derived from one in which the lines were similarly divided, since the writer occasionally omits just the number of letters which would suffice to fill a line, and that to the utter ruin of the sense; as if his eye had heedlessly wandered to the line immediately below.

Dr Scrivener cited examples in which complete lines were omitted and others in which the copyist, while halfway through one line, passed accidentally to the corresponding portion of the line below.

It is therefore evident that the copying was performed by a scribe who was both careless and incompetent.

A careful copyist would not have made such mistakes so frequently. Only a highly incompetent scribe would have failed, upon reviewing the page, to detect and correct omissions that completely destroyed the meaning.

Dr Scrivener, judgment on this feature of the case is entitled to the highest confidence.

Like other antiquarians, he was deeply impressed by the importance of Tischendorf, discovery. It was only from a strict sense of duty and honesty, and with evident reluctance, that he brought himself to identify the manuscript, defects.

The following admission from him therefore carries considerable weight:

It must be confessed indeed that the Codex Sinaiticus abounds with similar errors of the eye and pen, to an extent not unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first-rate importance;

so that Tregelles has freely pronounced that ,the state of the text, as proceeding from the first scribe, may be regarded as very rough.,

Speaking of the character of the two oldest manuscripts, Dean Burgon wrote:

The impurity of the text exhibited by these codices is not a question of opinion but of fact. . . . In the Gospels alone Codex B, the Vatican, leaves out words or whole clauses no fewer than 1,491 times. It bears traces of careless transcription on every page. Codex Sinaiticus abounds with errors of the eye and pen to an extent not indeed unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first-rate importance. On many occasions ten, twenty, thirty, or forty words are dropped through sheer carelessness. Letters and words, and even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately cancelled; while that gross blunder by which a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the preceding clause occurs no fewer than 115 times in the New Testament.

In describing the five ancient Codices now in existence, Dean Burgon observed that four of them, and especially the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts:

have, within the last twenty years, established a tyrannical ascendancy over the imagination of the critics which can only be fitly spoken of as a blind superstition.

Those ancient Codices have indeed been blindly followed, although they differ not only from ninety-nine out of every hundred surviving manuscripts, but even from one another.

This last fact, which is plainly fatal to their combined claim to authority, has been inexplicably overlooked.

As it was said of the two false witnesses who came forward against Christ, so it may be said of these witnesses now brought forward against the Received Text:

But neither so did their witness agree together.

## THE NUMBER AND KINDS OF DIFFERENCES

As a sufficient illustration of the many differences between these two Codices and the great body of other manuscripts, we may observe that in the Gospels alone the Codex Vaticanus differs from the Received Text in the following particulars:

It omits at least 2,877 words.

It adds 536 words.

It substitutes 935 words.

It transposes 2,098 words.

It modifies 1,132 words.

This produces a total of 7,578 verbal differences.

The Sinaitic manuscript is even worse, for its total divergences in these same categories amount to nearly nine thousand.

Summing up the case against these two fourth-century Codices, together with the Codex Bezae, which is generally assigned to the sixth century, Dean Burgon solemnly declared, without the slightest hesitation, that they are:

three of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant;

that they:

exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with; and that they: have become, by whatever processfor their history is wholly unknownthe depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of truth which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God.

These are strong statements, but the facts upon which they rest appear fully to justify them.

Whatever particular excellencies may be attributed to the Revised Version of the New Testament, the fact that its underlying Greek Text was fashioned in conformity with the manuscripts described above is sufficient reason why Bible readers should avoid it.

In describing the preceding characteristics of the two most ancient Codices, as disclosed by close examination and careful comparison with the Received Text, we are not overlooking the fact that the many differences between them do not by themselves prove the corruption of the former.

Those differences could equally be explained by the theory adopted by the Revisers and supported by more recent Greek editorsnamely, that the two ancient Codices preserve the purer Text and that the corruptions and departures are found in the Received Text and the sources from which it was derived.

But it must first be remembered that the burden of proof rests

heavily upon those who support the two ancient Codices against the Received Text.

It is for them to establish their case by a clear preponderance of evidence.

They must show, by testimony carrying complete conviction, that God allowed His people for fifteen centuries or more to suffer the harmful effects of a corrupt Text, until the accidental discovery by Constantine Tischendorf in the middle of the nineteenth century of certain parchment leaves so lightly valued by their custodians that they had been cast into a waste-paper basket.

They must also explain why the Codex Vaticanus was eventually brought forth from its long and suspicious concealment at the papal headquarters.[4]

It is for them to explain, if they can, the agreement of a thousand manuscripts distributed across widely separated regions and extending over a thousand years, together with the evidence of ancient Versions and the writings of the fathers reaching back to the second century.

It is well known that corrupt and defective copies existed in the earliest centuries and that many alterations were made deliberately.

There is therefore no great difficulty in accounting for the survival of a small number of such manuscriptsperhaps only three.

Indeed, there is good reason to believe that they survived precisely because their numerous defects made them unsuitable for regular use.

The existence throughout the churches, however, of a Text now represented by more than a thousand surviving manuscripts and agreeing with the Received Text can only be adequately explained by the conclusion that this is the true Text.

Furthermore, we have shown from the evidence already presented that the two most ancient Codices display clear internal marks of their defective character.

In the case of the Sinaitic manuscript, we have also shown that the corrupt and defective work of its original scribe, or scribes, was well known to successive generations of those through whose hands it passed.

**SUMMARY**

We may briefly summarise the matter thus far.

1. The most important and regrettable departures of the New Greek Text from the Received Text were made with the support of less than one per cent of the available witnesses. In other words, the readings rejected by the Revisers are supported by more than ninety-nine per cent of the surviving Greek Texts, in addition to ancient Versions and the writings of the fathers.

2. The two manuscripts that exercised the controlling influence in most of those departures are so corrupt upon their face as to justify the conclusion that they survived chiefly because of their bad reputation.

With these facts before us, and remembering the leading part that the English-speaking peoples were to play in shaping the history of mankind during the eventful centuries following the appearance of the Version of 1611, we are justified in believing that it was by providential ordering that the preparation of that Version was not influenced by higher-critical theories in general or by the two ancient Codices we have been discussing in particular.

When we consider what the Authorised Version was to become to the world, the incomparable influence it was to exercise in shaping the course of events, and its role in accomplishing those eternal purposes of God for which Christ died and rose again and the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, we are fully warranted in believing that the circumstances surrounding its production were not governed by chance.

More than all other Versions combined, it was to become the Sword of the Spirit. All this was fully known to God beforehand.

We therefore believe that it was by His providential control that the translators had access to precisely those manuscripts available to them at the time, and to no others.

This belief does not conflict with the fact that man, part in preparing the Authorised Version bears, plainly enough, the marks of human infirmity.

## CHAPTER V

### *The Principle Of Ancient Evidence Only Examined*

We now come to examine the principle adopted by the various

editors of the Greek Text of the Bible.

This principle was imposed upon the Revision Committee, although, as we shall explain later, it was introduced in such a way that many members of the Committee were apparently unaware of it until after their work had ended.

We fully admit that the principle of following the most ancient manuscripts appears, on the surface, to be both reasonable and safe. Other things being equal, copies nearest in date to the original autographs are naturally the most likely to be free from error.

If, therefore, the question were simply whether we should follow the earliest manuscripts rather than later ones when constructing a Greek Text, there would be no dispute. Everyone would agree.

But that is not the situation before us.

It is impossible to follow the earliest manuscripts for the simple reason that they no longer exist. Not one of the many thousands of copies made, circulated, and read during the first three centuries is known to survive today.

We do, however, possess ancient Versions and quotations from the fathers dating back to the second century. According to the principle now under consideration, these witnesses should be given very great weight.

Is it not strange, then, that those who justify their methods by appealing to this principle, and who profess to follow it without qualification, should set it aside and accept the readings of fourth-century Codices whenever those readings conflict with second-century Versions and quotations?

Since the earliest manuscripts no longer exist, we cannot follow them. It is therefore clear that the problem before us cannot be solved merely by applying the simple rule we are examining.

Briefly stated, the situation is this.

On the one hand, we have the Greek Text of 1611, which served as the basis of the Authorised Version. This Text represents and agrees with approximately a thousand manuscripts extending back as far as the fifth century, together with Versions and quotations reaching back to the second century.

There is no dispute concerning this. Drs Westcott and Hort admitted the existence of this Text and even supposed that it had

been discussed and approved by councils of the Eastern churches as early as the third century.

On the other hand, we have the Codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Bezae. The first two are believed to date from the fourth century and the last from the sixth. These manuscripts differ from the Received Text in thousands of places through omissions, additions, substitutions, transpositions, and other alterations.

The question to be decided is therefore this:

Shall we stand by the Received Text, accepting corrections wherever they can be established by a clear preponderance of evidence, and treating the ancient Codices like all other witnesses whose credibility must be tested?

Or shall we abandon the Textus Receptus in favour of the Text of Westcott and Hort, or one of the several other Texts professedly constructed according to the principle of following the most ancient manuscripts?

This is the question we propose to discuss in the present chapter.

Before proceeding, it should be observed that the agreeing testimony of the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts, wherever they do agree, cannot properly be regarded as the testimony of two independent witnesses.

There is sufficient internal and external evidence to support the conclusion that these two Codices are closely related. They appear, in fact, to be copies derived from the same original, which was itself a deeply corrupt transcript of the New Testament.

It is admitted on all sides that the Text underlying the Authorised Version faithfully represents a Text widely used, if not universally used, as early as the second century. The Peshitta and Old Latin Versions, together with quotations from the fathers, provide abundant proof of this.

By contrast, there is no evidence that the two Codices now under consideration represent anything more than copies of a corrupt original made still worse in the process of copying.

## DIVINE SAFEGUARDS TO THE TEXT

It is appropriate at this point to direct attention to the Divinely ordained means by which the sacred Text has been protected from serious corruption.

He who gave the Holy Scriptures to men to serve throughout the age as the sure foundation of that faith of the Son of God which alone avails for personal salvation, and also as the sufficient rule of life and conduct for the household of faith, has not failed to provide effective means for preserving His written Word.

These means accord with God, usual method of continuing the line of a living thing. They are inherent in the thing itself rather than added to it from outside.

It is part of the normal life of every living creature to provide for the continuation and multiplication of others of its own kind.

Just as grain supplies both bread to the eater and seed to the sower, so God has provided that His living Word should both nourish each generation of saints and increase and multiply itself.

As it is written:

And the word of God increased.

Acts 6:7

And again:

But the word of God grew and multiplied.

Acts 12:24

And once more:

So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Acts 19:20

The principal means by which this purpose has been accomplished are as follows.

## 1. THE MULTIPLICATION OF COPIES

There was a continual necessity for a great and steadily increasing number of copies of the Scriptures.

This multiplication of copies provided, automatically, the most effective protection imaginable against corruption of the Text.

## 2. THE TRANSLATION OF SCRIPTURE INTO MANY LANGUAGES

There was also a necessity for the Scriptures to be translated into many different languages.

The translation of the written Word into various tongues was a continuation of that which the miracle of Pentecost revealed as a distinctive characteristic of this age: that every man should hear the saving truth of God in the language in which he was born.

The agreement of two or more of the earliest Versions would therefore go far towards establishing the true reading of any disputed passage.

It is appropriate here to emphasise the great value of an ancient Version as a witness to the purity of the original Text from which it was translated.

Those undertaking a work of such importance as translating the New Testament into another language would naturally make it their first concern to obtain the best Greek Text available.

A Version such as the Syriac or Old Latin, dating from the second century, is therefore a clear witness to the Text recognised at that early period as the true Text.

This point has an important bearing upon the question now before us.

We must remember that:

We have no actual copiesthat is, original Greek Textsso old as the Syriac and Latin Versionsthat is, translationsby probably more than two hundred years.

So wrote Burgon and Miller in The Traditional Text.

Canon Cook likewise stated:

The oldest Versions are far more ancient than the oldest Greek manuscripts.

Those venerable Versions prove that there existed in their day a standard Text agreeing substantially with our Textus Receptus.

It must therefore be recognised that the most ancient evidence is entirely in favour of the Received Text.

## 3. THE QUOTATIONS OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN WRITERS

The activity of the earliest enemies of the Church made it necessary for the defenders of the faith, from the very beginning, to quote extensively from every part of the New Testament.

In this way, a vast body of evidence of the highest credibility concerning the true reading of disputed passages was accumulated and preserved for us in the writings of the so-called church fathers.

But what value would all these checks and safeguards possess if men were permitted to follow so plainly unsound a principle as allowing the most ancient surviving manuscripts to decide every

dispute?

God, however, may be trusted to ensure that every attempt to sweep away His appointed means of preservation will ultimately fail, as it has in the present case.

## THE VALUE OF COMPARATIVELY LATE MANUSCRIPTS

It is true that most surviving copies of the Greek New Testament date from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries. They are therefore separated from the inspired original Writings by a thousand years or more.

Nevertheless, no reasonable person should doubt that they faithfully represent those originals, or that the agreement of a large majority of them would correctly determine every disputed reading.

The surviving Texts of ancient secular writers such as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Sophocles are few compared with the thousand manuscripts of Scripture. They are also separated from their originals by approximately five hundred additional years.

Moreover, they lack the extraordinary safeguards already described by which the integrity of the Scriptures has been protected.

Yet no one doubts that we possess substantially correct Texts of those ancient writers.

The security enjoyed by the Text of Scripture is therefore, as has been well said:

altogether unique and extraordinary.

## ERRORS OF OMISSION

In considering the principle of following the most ancient manuscripts, it is important to observe how that principle operates in relation to the commonest of all copying mistakes: errors of omission.

As an example, we may consider the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark, which we shall discuss more fully later.

Those verses are absolutely necessary to the completeness of the Gospel. Yet because they are absent from the two most ancient manuscripts, the Revisers marked them as probably spurious.

Here, then, we may raise a question upon which the merits of the Revised Version may be decided, at least to a very considerable extent:

Should the purely negative testimony of those two Codicesthat

is, the fact that certain words or passages are absent from thembe permitted to overthrow the affirmative testimony of hundreds of other Greek manuscripts, ancient Versions, and quotations from the church fathers?

Anyone of ordinary intelligence may be trusted to answer this question correctly when the following considerations are taken into account.

## 1. AFFIRMATIVE AND NEGATIVE TESTIMONY

The commonest mistakes made in copying manuscripts, or in repeating information, are omissions caused by lapses of memory or failures of attention.

It is therefore an accepted principle of evidence that the testimony of one competent witness who says that he saw or heard a particular thing carries more weight than that of a dozen others who can only say that they did not see or hear it, or do not remember it.

Other things being equal, therefore, the affirmative evidence of the other three ancient Codices and Versions, together with that of the fathers who quoted these verses as unquestioned Scripture, is a hundred times more worthy of belief than the negative testimony of the two manuscripts allowed to control the Text of the Revised Version.

## 2. ANTIQUITY IS NOT IN ITSELF PROOF OF ACCURACY

As we have already stated, a superstitious deference was shown towards the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts because of their supposed greater antiquity.

The underlying assumption was that the older the manuscript, the more likely it was to be correct.

But that assumption is entirely unjustified.

In the particular case before us, the Text of the Authorised Version is supported by the agreeing testimony of numerous manuscripts obtained from widely separated parts of the world.

These manuscripts were copies of older copies that no longer exist. Nevertheless, according to the soundest principles of evidence, their concurrent testimony conclusively establishes the disputed passages wherever the two ancient Codices differ from them.

The authenticity of the last twelve verses of Mark is so important that we propose to present the evidence concerning them more fully

in a later chapter.

We refer to them here only as an impressive illustration of a general principle.

That principlethe causes and frequency of errors of omissionis especially important in this case because, as we have already seen, the original scribe of the Codex Sinaiticus was particularly prone to errors of that kind.

## A TEST OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ANCIENT EVIDENCE

Let us use an illustration to demonstrate the principle we are seeking to establish: that the concurrent testimony of the manuscripts supporting the Received Text conclusively establishes its authenticity in those places where it differs from the New Greek Text of Westcott and Hort.

Suppose that a hundred copies were made of an original document held at the central office of a large business. These copies were prepared by different copyists and sent to a hundred branch offices throughout the world.

Suppose also that the document contained instructions governing the conduct of that business for many generations. As the individual manuscripts wore out through constant use, they would therefore have to be copied again and again.

Now suppose that, after several centuries, one of the earliest copies was discovered. Upon examination, it was found to lack a word or sentence contained in the later copies still in use.

Suppose it then became necessary to determine whether that word or sentence was genuine.

For this purpose, twelve manuscripts then in active use in widely separated parts of the world were examined. Each was a comparatively late copy derived from earlier copies that had been used until they wore out.

If the disputed word or sentence appeared in every one of those later copies, would not its authenticity be established beyond reasonable dispute?

It surely would.

Its absence from the single ancient copy could easily be explained by an error of omission. Its presence in numerous later copies, each descending from an independent source, could not be explained

except on the ground that the disputed words were genuine.

Now suppose, in addition, that there existed translations of the document into several foreign languages. Suppose those translations were older than the earliest surviving manuscript in the original language.

Suppose also that the disputed passage was quoted in the writings of persons who lived in or near the time when the original document was written.

If the disputed word or sentence appeared in every one of those translations and quotations, would not its genuineness be established beyond the faintest shadow of doubt?

This supposed case gives a good indication of the strength of the evidence supporting the Text of the Authorised Version.

In establishing that Text, proper weight was given to the agreeing testimony of numerous manuscripts in actual use among churches widely separated from one another. Weight was also given to the corroborating testimony of the most ancient Versions and the writings of the fathers.

In establishing the Text of the Revised Version, however, evidence of the highest quality was repeatedly rejected in favour of evidence of the lowest quality.

## THE STRENGTH OF THE CASE IN FAVOUR OF THE RECEIVED TEXT

### 3. THE TWO PRINCIPAL MANUSCRIPTS IMPEACH THEIR OWN TESTIMONY

The case in favour of the Greek Text underlying the Authorised Version is stronger still.

When the two manuscripts which controlled the Text of Westcott and Hort are closely examined, they are found to contain such internal evidence of unreliability that their own testimony is impeached and they become wholly unworthy of confidence.

They resemble witnesses who have been exposed in so many false statements that their entire testimony is discredited.

To begin with, their history leaves them open to serious suspicion.

Why should a particular manuscript have been carefully preserved in the Vatican unless it contained errors and textual corruptions

favourable to the doctrines and practices of Rome?

And why was the other manuscript, discovered by Tischendorf in the nineteenth century, allowed to remain unused for hundreds of yearsfrom the fourth century, as is supposed, until the nineteenth?

A reasonable inference is that the manuscript was discarded and eventually consigned to a waste-paper basket because it was known to be filled with errors of various kinds.

This inference is raised almost to certainty by the fact that successive owners repeatedly undertook the correction of the entire manuscript.

But we need not rest the case upon circumstances alone.

When the two manuscripts are carefully examined, they display clear evidence of having been derived from a common and deeply corrupt source.

The late Dr Edward Vining of Cambridge, Massachusetts, investigated this question thoroughly. He produced evidence tending to show that they were careless copies of an original brought by Origen from Egypt, where, as is well known, the Scriptures were corrupted from an early period in the interests of ascetic practices similar to those now associated with the Church of Rome.

Dr Scrivener, generally regarded as the ablest of the textual critics, wrote:

The worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subjected originated within a hundred years after it was composed.

He further stated that:

Irenaeus and the African Fathers used far inferior manuscripts to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephens, thirteen centuries later, when moulding the Textus Receptus.

In view of such facts, it is easy to see what destruction would be brought upon the sacred Text if its composition were controlled by two manuscripts of Egyptian origin, while the agreement of hundreds of later manuscripts of good reputation, the most ancient and trustworthy Versions, and the independent testimony of the earliest Christian writers were rejected.

## 4. THE TESTIMONY OF THE GREAT MAJORITY WAS REJECTED

Dr Kenyon of the British Museum stated that:

The manuscripts of the New Testament are counted by hundreds and even thousands.

It is therefore astonishing that the Vatican or Sinaitic manuscript, whether separately or together where they agree, should ever have been accepted against the concurrent testimony of the multitude of opposing witnesses.

Yet this was the rule consistently followed in compiling the Text of the Revised Version.

Canon Cook, in The Revised Version of the First Three Gospels, wrote:

By far the greatest number of innovations, including those which give the severest shocks to our minds, are adopted on the testimony of two manuscripts, or even of one manuscript, against the distinct testimony of all other manuscripts, uncial and cursive. [5] . . . The Vatican Codex, sometimes alone, but generally in accord with the Sinaitic, is responsible for nine-tenths of the most striking innovations in the Revised Version.

We have considered the principle followed by modern editors of the Greek Text of the New Testament with some care.

We have done so, first, because the question and the facts by which it must be decided are beyond the reach of most of those for whose benefit we are writing.

Second, if we are correct in concluding that the principle under consideration is entirely unsound, contrary to the recognised rules of evidence, and certain to mislead those who submit to it, then the foundation has been completely removed from beneath the Revised Version of 1881 and every other Version resting upon the same corrupt Greek Text, or upon a Text constructed according to the same principles.

We close our remarks under this heading by quoting from Scrivener, A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, published in 1883:

Dr Hort, system is entirely destitute of historical foundation.

And again:

We are compelled to repeat as emphatically as ever our strong conviction that the hypothesis to which heDr Horthas devoted so many laborious years is destitute not only of historical foundation

but of all probability resulting from the internal goodness of the text which its adoption would force upon us.

Scrivener quoted Dr Hort as saying:

We cannot doubt that St Luke 23:34 comes from an extraneous source.

To this he replied:

Nor can we, on our part, doubt that the system which entails such consequences is hopelessly self-condemned.

From all that has been considered thus far in our inquiry, we therefore conclude that the Revised Version should be rejected.

It should be rejected not only because of the many unsupported departures from the Authorised Version which it contains, but also because the Greek Text upon which it is based was constructed according to a principle so unsound that the resulting Text could not be anything other than hopelessly corrupt.

## CHAPTER VI

*The Procedure Of The Revision Committee*

Some of our readers may be asking how it was possible for the learned men who composed the Revision Committee to allow the great body of testimony supporting the authenticity of the Received Text to be set aside upon the authority of two Codices as doubtful as those we have been considering.

The explanation is that the Revisers did not examine these matters at all.

They were not appointed to refashion the Greek Text, for that task lay entirely outside their instructions. They therefore had no occasion to enter into the many complicated questions involved in weighing the evidence for and against the Received Text.

Nor was it their duty to determine the soundness of the principle of following only the most ancient manuscripts.

The published account of their proceedings, written by Dr Newth, one of the Revisers, makes it clear that the Committee did not have before it, or give consideration to, the important facts affecting the character of the two ancient witnesses which we have presented to our readers.

An important point must therefore be clearly understood.

No appeal can properly be made to the scholarship of the Revision Committee, however great that scholarship may have been, in support of either the Greek Text underlying the Revised Version or the principles governing the formation of that Text.

In view of all the facts, it appears that the members of the Committee themselves did not realise until after the Committee had disbanded, and their work had come under the examination of able scholars and faithful men, that they had seemingly given their official approval to the substitution of the New Greek Text of Westcott and Hort for the Textus Receptus.

The Westcott and Hort Text had not yet been published. It had therefore never been subjected to public examination or criticism, nor had the principles upon which it had been constructed been investigated.

Only after it was too late were the facts understood, even by the Revisers themselves.

The source of the mischief has therefore been traced to those two scholars and to a Text that had not yet appeared publicly or been subjected to the scrutiny of other scholars.

We now know that it was not until after the Revised Version of the New Testament had been published that it became generally known that the Westcott and Hort Text had been quietly imposed upon the Revisers and had been brought into conformity with the two ancient Codices, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.

Dean Burgon was among the first to call attention to the fact that the most radical departures in the Revised Version were not new translations of the Received Text. They arose instead from alterations made to the Greek Text itself.

No announcement of this important fact had been made by the Committee. Indeed, there appears to have been a disposition to draw a veil over this part of its proceedings.

Dean Burgon wrote:

But I traced the mischief home to its true authorsDrs Westcott and Horta copy of whose unpublished text, the most vicious in existence, had been confidentially, and under pledges of the strictest secrecy, placed in the hands of every member of the revising body.

Dean Burgon then proceeded to publish some of these facts in a

series of articles which appeared in the Quarterly Review in 1883.

Subsequent events have fully confirmed the judgment he expressed at that time: that careful investigation would eventually convince all competent judges that the principles upon which the New Greek Text had been constructed were:

radically unsound;

and that:

the Revision of 1881 must come to be universally regarded aswhat it most certainly isthe most astonishing, as well as the most calamitous, literary blunder of the age.

Dean Burgon had begun his examination of the Revised Version upon the assumption that the work was what its name implied: a revision of the Authorised Version.

But, as he expressed it:

we speedily found that an entirely different problem awaited us. We made the distressing discovery that the underlying Greek Text had been completely refashioned throughout.

This is all the more serious because no reader of the Preface to the Revised Version would discover any indication that such a thing had occurred.

Thanks, however, to the thorough investigations of scholars of the first rank, some of whom are quoted in this volume, it is now possible for everyone interested in this great and solemn question to satisfy himself that Drs Westcott and Hort had indeed succeeded, as Dean Burgon said, in producing:

a Text vastly more remote from the inspired autographs of the evangelists and apostles of our Lord than any which has appeared since the invention of printing.

Referring elsewhere to this important feature of the case, Dean Burgon wrote:

A revision of the English Authorised Version[6] having been sanctioned by the Convocation of the Southern Province in 1871, the opportunity was eagerly grasped by two irresponsible scholars of the University of Cambridgemeaning Drs Westcott and Hortfor obtaining the general sanction of the Revising body, and thus indirectly of the Convocation itself, for a private venture of their owntheir privately devised Revision of the Greek Text.

On that Greek Text of theirswhich I hold to be the most depraved that has ever appeared in printwith some slight modifications, our English Authorised Version has been silently revised: silently, I say, for in the margin of the English no record is preserved of the underlying Textual changes introduced by the Revisionists.

On the contrary, use has been made of that margin to insinuate suspicion and distrust, in countless particulars, as to the authenticity of portions of the Text which have been permitted to remain unaltered.

## THE PROCEDURE OF THE REVISION COMMITTEE

Dr Newth, one of the members, published an account of the method followed by the Revision Committee in determining the final reading of the English Text.

As he describes it, the procedure was certainly not calculated to inspire confidence in the results.

The method was as follows.

When a passage came under consideration, the Chairman asked:

Are any Textual changes proposed?

If an alteration was proposed:

the evidence for and against is briefly stated.

This was done by two members of the Company, Dr Scrivener and Dr Hort.

If those two members disagreed:

the vote of the Company is taken, and the proposed Reading accepted or rejected.

When the Text had been settled in this manner, the Chairman asked for proposals concerning the renderingthat is, the translation.

It therefore appears that the Revisers themselves made no attempt to examine the evidence relating to the many disputed readings.

They listened only to the views of two members of the Committee, one of whom, as we have seen, was fatally governed by an unsound theory. The Committee then settled the Text in a summary fashion by majority vote.

Can we have confidence in a Text settled by such a hasty method?

Sir Edmund Beckett, in his book Should the Revised Be Authorised?, page 42, aptly remarked that if Dr Newth, description of the process by which the Revisers settled the Greek alterations

was not intended as a joke, it was quite sufficient to settle the Revised Greek Testament in a very different sense.

Canon Cook, in The Revised Version of the First Three Gospels Considered, wrote concerning Dr Newth, explanation:

Such a proceeding appeared to me so strange that I fully expected the account would be corrected, or that some explanation would be given which might remove the very unpleasant impression.

No such correction or explanation followed.

On the contrary, the Chairman himself, Bishop Ellicott, confirmed that Dr Newth, account of the method by which the Greek Text had been settled was accurate.

Sir Edmund Beckett therefore expressed the matter well when he said that Dr Newth, account of the way in which the Revision Committee settled the Greek Text was sufficient to settle the Revised Version in a very different sense.

In producing the New Greek Text, the Revisers departed from the Textus Receptus in nearly six thousand places.

Every proposed alteration should have been made the subject of careful investigation. The decision in every case should have been reached according to the weight of the evidence both for and against the change.

But from the published account of the proceedingsan account confirmed as accurate by the Chairman, Bishop Ellicottwe understand that the Committee never examined the evidence in any individual case or undertook any proper weighing of it.

## CHAPTER VII

*Specific Examples Of Textual Corruption*

We believe enough has now been said to impeach successfully the credibility of the two ancient witnesses whose testimony was relied upon so heavily in constructing the Greek Text of the Revised Version.

We shall therefore proceed to consider several conspicuous examples in which passages or clauses have either been corrupted or brought under unjust suspicion through the testimony of those manuscripts, which is largely negative in character.

This will throw further light upon the character of those witnesses,

for one effective way of discrediting their testimony is to present actual examples of the harm caused by accepting it.

## THE LAST TWELVE VERSES OF MARK

In his unanswered and unanswerable work concerning this famous passage, published several years before the Revised Version appeared, so that the Revisers were fully informed concerning the evidence, Dean Burgon wrote:

The consentient witness of the manuscripts is even extraordinary. With the exception of the two uncial manuscripts which have just been namedVaticanus and Sinaiticusthere is not one Codex in existence, uncial or cursiveand we are acquainted with at least eighteen other uncials and about six hundred cursives of this Gospelwhich leaves out the last twelve verses of St Mark.

The omission of these twelve verses, I repeat, in itself destroys our confidence in Codex BVaticanusand Codex Sinaiticus. . . . Nothing whatever which has hitherto come before us lends the slightest countenance to the modern dream that St Mark, Gospel, as it left the hands of its inspired author, ended abruptly at verse 8. . . . The notion is an invention, a pure imagination of the critics, ever since the days of Griesbach.

The fact that the Revisers cast suspicion upon a passage as important as the conclusion of Mark, Gospel is sufficient in itself to arouse concern regarding their entire work and to create uncertainty concerning their fitness for the great task entrusted to them.

The evidence supporting the authenticity of this passage is simply overwhelming.

## THE ANGELIC MESSAGE

LUKE 2:14

As another typical example of the kind of alteration the Revisers attempted to introduce through the unsound methods they followed, we take the words of the angelic message:

And on earth peace, good will toward men.

For these words, the Revisers, upon the authority of the small group of corrupt manuscripts to which they showed such superstitious deference, substituted the awkward and unreasonable phrase:

peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

We should suppose that anyone acquainted with the language

of Scripture and possessing even a moderate degree of spiritual discernment would readily conclude that such a phrase could never have formed part of the true Word of God.

But when we return to the actual evidence, we find that, with the exception of four Codices of bad reputationtwo of which were corrected concerning this very passage in the manuscripts themselvesevery surviving copy of the Gospels, amounting to many hundreds, contains the reading of the Received Text.

That reading is also supported by five ancient Versions and by quotations from more than twenty fathers.

This is a case in which the evidence leaves no room for the slightest doubt.

It is also a fair example of the position concerning nearly all the changes made to the Greek Text.

## THE LORD, AGONY IN THE GARDEN AND HIS PRAYER FOR HIS MURDERERS

As further examples of the damage caused by the system adopted by the Revisers, we refer to Luke 22:43,44 and Luke 23:34.

The Revisers enclosed these passages, together with many otherssome of them of great importancein brackets to indicate the moral certainty they claimed to possess that the words were spurious.

The first passage describes the Lord, agony and bloody sweat in the garden:

And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

The second contains Christ, vitally important prayer upon the cross:

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

We shall comment further upon this latter passage below.

The state of the evidence in these two instances, as in the preceding example, establishes beyond doubt that both passages are genuine Scripture.

## TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST

As another example among many, we take the precious words of the Lord Jesus:

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

The Revisers removed these words from Matthew 18:11, although they are attested by every known uncial manuscript except threethe usual three of bad characterand by every known cursive manuscript except three.

They are also supported by numerous Versions, by the lectionaries of many churches, and by a large number of fathers.

In brief, the evidence overwhelmingly establishes the genuineness of the passage.

## PETER WALKING ON THE SEA

In Matthew 14:30, the Authorised Version states that when Peter:

saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid.

The Revised Version removes the word boisterous, although that word is of great importance in the passage.

The only warrant for this unnecessary alteration, which damages the meaning, is that Tischendorfalone among all the editorsrejected the word.

The Revisers made matters worse by placing in the margin the misleading statement:

Many ancient authorities add strong.

The reader would naturally understand from this that most authorities, and particularly most of the ancient authorities, omit the word.

The truth, however, is that only two manuscripts omit it.

Sir Edmund Beckett wrote concerning them:

And those two manuscripts appear also to be rather distinguished for blunders than for excellence.

Here, therefore, we have a wholly unjustifiable alteration combined with a seriously misleading statement concerning the evidence upon which it was based.

## THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

Another example of harmful and entirely unwarranted interference with an important passage is found in the alteration of 1 Timothy 3:16.

The words:

God was manifest in the flesh

were changed to:

He who was manifested in the flesh.

It is immediately apparent how seriously this alteration affects the foundational truth of the Deity of our Lord.

Concerning the evidence in this case, Dean Burgon stated that the reading adopted by the Revisers:

is not to be found in more than two copies of St Paul, Epistles, is not certainly supported by a single Version, and is not clearly advocated by a single Father.

In brief, the evidence is overwhelmingly against it.

In his decisive reply to Bishop Ellicott, Chairman of the Revision Committee, Dean Burgon fully vindicated the authenticity of the reading found in the Received Text in this vitally important passage.

From that reply, we extract the following:

Behold then the provision which the Author of Scripture has made for the effectual conservation in its integrity of this portion of His Written Word!

Upwards of eighteen hundred years have run their course since the Holy Ghost, by His servant Paul, rehearsed ,the Mystery of Godliness,, declaring this to be the great foundation fact, namely, that ,God was manifest in the flesh.,

And lo! Out of 254 copies of St Paul, Epistles, no fewer than 252 are discovered to have preserved that expression.

The copies whereof we speak were procured in every part of Christendom, being derived in every instance from copies older than themselves; which again were transcripts of copies older still. They have since found their way, without design or contrivance, into the libraries of every country in Europe, where they have been jealously guarded.

Such agreement among hundreds of witnesses, geographically separated from one another, establishes the true reading beyond the faintest shadow of doubt.

This is especially so because the error of substituting who for God can easily be explained by the resemblance, in the original uncial manuscripts, between the conventional abbreviation for God and the relative pronoun who.

We submit, as the proper and just conclusion from these facts, that men who, with such evidence before them, would remove the

word God from Scripture at this vital point and replace it with who have thereby demonstrated their unfitness for the work of revising the Greek Text of the New Testament.

## THE OMISSION OF MARK 6:11

The Revisers rejected as spurious the words of Christ:

Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Referring to this removal, Dean Burgon wrote in a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Revision Committee:

How serious the consequences have been they only know who have been at pains to examine your work with close attention.

Not only have you on countless occasions thrust out words, clauses, and entire sentences of genuine Scripture, but you have been careful that no trace should survive of the fatal injury you have inflicted.

I wonder you were not afraid.

Can I be wrong in deeming such a proceeding to be in a high degree sinful? Has not the Spirit pronounced a tremendous doomRevelation 22:19against those who do such things?

Were you not afraid, for instance, to leave out from Mark 6:11 those solemn words of our Saviour, ‚Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city‚?

Have you studied St Mark, Gospel to so little purpose as not to know that the six uncials on which you rely are the depositories of an abominably corrupt recension of the second Gospel?

## BLESS THEM THAT CURSE YOU

MATTHEW 5:44

In the same letter, referring to the omission from Matthew 5:44, Dean Burgon wrote:

But you have committed a yet more deplorable blunder whenwithout leaving behind you either note or comment of any sortyou obliterated from St Matthew 5:44 the solemn words which I proceed to underline:

‚Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.‚

You relied almost exclusively on those two false witnesses of

which you are so superstitiously fondthe Vatican and Sinaitic manuscriptsregardless of the testimony of almost all the other copies besides, of almost all the Versions, and of a host of primitive fathers, half of whom lived and died before our two oldest manuscripts came into being.

## FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

We have already quoted Dr Hort, statement concerning the infinitely precious words:

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

These words are so Divinely gracious that they are self-authenticating. Yet Dr Hort declared that he could not doubt that they:

came from an extraneous source.

Dean Burgon commented:

These twelve precious words Drs Westcott and Hort enclose within double brackets in token of the ,moral certainty, they entertain that the words are spurious.

And yet these words are found in every known uncial and in every known cursive copy, except four; besides being found in every ancient Version.

And what amountwe ask the question with sincere simplicitywhat amount of evidence is calculated to inspire undoubted confidence in any existing reading, if not such a concurrence of authorities as this?

Concerning the patristic evidence for the passage, he continued:

We find our Saviour, prayer attested by upwards of forty ancient fathers, from the second to the eighth centuries. . . .

How could our Revisionists dare to insinuate doubts into wavering hearts and unlearned heads where, as here, they were bound to know there exists no manner of doubt at all?

## AND AM KNOWN OF MINE

John 10:14 reads in the Authorised Version:

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

For the final clause, the Revised Version substitutes:

and mine own know me.

In view of the words that immediately follow:

As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father,

this change destroys the exquisite distinction of expression in the original.

The Authorised Version indicates that, while the knowledge existing between the Father and the Son is mutual and identical in character, the creature, knowledge of the Creator is of an entirely different kind.

The Revised reading places the creature, knowledge of the Creator upon the same level as the Father, knowledge of the Son and the Son, knowledge of the Father.

Speaking of this regrettable change, Dean Burgon wrote:

The refinement in question has been faithfully retained all down the ages by every copy in existence, except the Vatican and the Sinaitic, and two others of equally bad character.

Does anyone in his sober senses suppose that, if St John had written ‚Mine own know Me,, 996 manuscripts out of a thousand at the end of eighteen hundred years would be found to exhibit ‚I am known of Mine,?

Dr Malan summarised his examination of the first chapter of Matthew as it appears in the Revised Version in these words:

The Revisers have made sixty changes in that chapter. Of these one is good, and one is admissible. All the restfifty-eightappear ill-judged or unnecessary.

Canon Cook gave the following judgment concerning the Revisers, Text of the first three Gospels:

It is not too much to say that in nine passages out of tennay, to go furtherin every passage of vital importance as regards the integrity of Holy Scripture, the veracity of the sacred writers, and the records of our Lord, sayings, nearly all ancient Versions and, with very few exceptions, all ancient fathers support the readings rejected by the Revisers.

Sir Edmund Beckett, in the work already quoted, wrote concerning the critical principles supposedly followed by the Revisers:

It would take a great many critical maxims to convince me that the apostles wrote what can only be fairly translated into nonsense; which they sometimes did, if the Revisers, new readings are all right.

And moreover their adoption of them makes one suspicious about many other readings which cannot be brought under that test.

Many further examples might be given of alterations made to the Greek Text out of deference to the two ancient Codices, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, and against the overwhelmingly greater testimony of Greek manuscripts, ancient Versions, and the fathers.

Such alterations inflict evident injury upon the Holy Scriptures.

The examples already presented, however, are more than sufficient to justify the conclusion that the New Greek Text underlying the Revised Versionwhich is virtually the Text of Westcott and Hortis vastly inferior to the Text underlying the Authorised Version.

They also establish that the witnesses whose testimony controlled the construction of that New Greek Text are entirely untrustworthy.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Changes In Translation*

Having considered those departures of the Revised Version from the Authorised Version that resulted from the use of a different Greek Text, we now come to changes of another kind: alterations to words and sentences where no corresponding change was made in the Greek Text.

In considering this class of changes, we do not overlook what is admitted by all competent authorities: that the Authorised Version could be corrected in certain passages where the meaning has become obscure because of changes in English usage during the intervening three centuries, or where careful study and more recent discoveries have brought better renderings to light.

Such instances, however, are comparatively few, whereas the Revised Version contains approximately thirty-six thousand departures, both small and great, from the Authorised Version.

What are we to say of such an enormous number of alterations?

Sir Edmund Beckett wrote:

The two principal complaints of the work of the Revisers made by nearly every review, and by some of their own members, who protested in vain, are of the enormous number of alterations which convict themselves of being unnecessary; and the still more serious one that they have hardly changed a sentence without spoiling its English, sometimes by the smallest touch or transposition of a word, and still more by the larger alterations.

The condemnation of a great deal of the Revisers, work, in real fidelity of translation, as well as in style, by such a scholar as the Bishop of Lincoln has been from his youth, is a blow from which they will not easily recover. . . . Another dignitary and scholar of eminence has publicly declared that he dissented from one-thirdwhich is twelve thousandof the alterations the more ambitious majority persisted in; and it is generally understood that another Dean resigned for the same reason in despair.

In a great many instances, changes were made to the tenses of verbs according to the theory advocated by Drs Westcott and Hort that the correct rendering of the Greek aorist required such alterations.

Since that time, however, this theory has been seriously questioned.

Indeed, a writer in The Times of London on 17 January 1920 observed:

Some years ago Bishop Westcott, son told the readers of The Times that the view taken by the Revisers of the proper meaning of the Greek aorist, which led to so many alterations, was now known to be mistaken.

One does not need to be a Greek scholar in order to form an opinion concerning the many changes of words and phrases made by the Revisers in passages where no alteration of meaning was intended.

Such changes become apparent through a simple comparison of the two Versions. Anyone who has become familiar with the incomparable style of the Authorised Version must continually suffer offence and annoyance when hearing familiar passages rendered in the Revised Version.

Speaking on this point, Dean Burgon wrote in The Revision Revised:

The English, as well as the Greek, of the newly Revised Version, is hopelessly at fault. It is to me simply unintelligible how a company of scholars can have spent ten years in elaborating such a very unsatisfactory production.

Their uncouth phraseology and their jerky sentences, their pedantic obscurity and unidiomatic English, contrast painfully with the happy turns of expression, the music of the cadences, the felicities of the rhythm of our Authorised Version. . . .

It is, however, the systematic depravation of the underlying Greek which does so grievously offend me. For this is nothing else but a poisoning of the River of Life at its Sacred Source.

Our Revisers stand convicted of having deliberately rejected the words of Inspiration in every page, and of having substituted for them fabricated readings which the Church has long since refused to acknowledge, or else has rejected with abhorrencereadings which survive at this time only in a little handful of documents of the most depraved type.

## DR ALEXANDER CARSON

Dr Alexander Carson, in The Inspiration of the Scriptures, page 198, rightly wrote:

There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a translation is good according as it is literal. It may be asserted that, without exception, a literal translation of any book cannot be a faithful one.

For if the word is not used in its literal sense in the original, it is a mistranslation of it to translate it literally.

This is a canon of Biblical Interpretation of universal application, and of the greatest momenta canon not only often violated, but to violate which is, in the estimation of some translators, the highest praise.

A translation of this kind, instead of conveying the original with additional light, is simply unintelligible.

The truth of Dr Carson, statement appears to us self-evident.

It follows that the making of a genuine translation is not merely a matter of giving the literal meaning of every word in the original. It follows also that a good translator requires qualifications beyond a knowledge of the original language.

Therefore, in comparing the two rival Versions, much depends upon whether the translators of 1881 were as well qualified for their work as those of 1611.

To assist in deciding this question, we shall present in this chapter a few examples of passages in which alterations were made.

We believe, however, that when the two Versions are considered broadly, most readers will recognise the great superiority of the older Version.

That work has commended itself to acknowledged masters of the

English language, as well as to millions of ordinary readers, for more than three centuries. It has occupied a place in the world approached by no other book in any language.

We know that it is only a translation. We also know that, as Joseph Parker said:

A translation may have its faults, and copyists may make blunders, yet we still call it the Holy Bible.

It is to us, as it has been to ten generations before us, in truth and reality, the Living Word of the Living God.

Such being the case, our wisdom is to hold firmly to the old Version and to every part of it, except in those specific instancesand they are fewwhere clear proof establishes that a change is necessary.

## EXAMPLES OF CHANGES IN TRANSLATION

In considering a few of the thousands of new renderings introduced by the Revisers, it should be remembered that, according to the instructions under which they acted, they were not to make:

any new translation of the Bible, nor any alteration of the language, except where, in the judgment of the most competent scholars, such change is necessary.

They were further instructed that:

in such necessary changes, the style of the language employed in the existing Version be closely followed.

Can any competent scholar maintain that even a substantial fraction of the many alterations embodied in the Revised Version were necessary?

And will anyone claim that, in the alterations introduced, the style of the existing Version was closely followed?

We have already pointed out that, in the first chapter of Matthew alone, the Revisers made sixty changes. According to the judgment of Dr Malan, fifty-eight of these were either ill-judged or unnecessary.

Proceeding to Matthew 4:12, we find that the words:

John was cast into prison

were changed to:

John was delivered up.

It may be claimed that the latter is a more literal rendering. It is not, however, a better translation, for the best translation is that which most clearly conveys the meaning of the original, and the

expression delivered up conveys no definite meaning to the ordinary English reader in this context.

In Luke 8:45,46, the Revised Version introduced no fewer than nineteen changes into thirty-four words.

In 2 Peter 1:5,7, thirty changes were made in a passage containing only fifty-five words.

These are extreme examples of the extraordinary tendency of the Revisers to make unnecessary alterations.

Concerning the first of these passages, Dean Burgon wrote:

I challenge any competent scholar in Great Britain to say whether every one of these changes be not absolutely useless, or else decidedly a change for the worse; six of them being downright errors.

Concerning the second passage, he wrote:

To ourselves it appears that every one of these changes is a change for the worse, and that one of the most exquisite passages in the New Testament has been hopelessly spoiledrendered in fact well-nigh unintelligibleby the pedantic officiousness of the Revisers.

PAUL BEFORE KING AGRIPPA

In Acts 26:24, the words of Festus to Paul:

much learning doth make thee mad

were changed in the Revised Version to:

thy much learning doth turn thee to madness.

Concerning this novel and awkward expression, Sir Edmund Beckett wrote:

We have heard of men being naturally inclined to madness, or being driven to madness by despair, and of being turned mad; and of wisdom being turned to madness; but never before have we heard of a man being turned to madness.

It is idle to say the Greek required it; for the literal sense would be nonsense; and they have not given even the literal sense.

What they have given us is a translation neither literal, nor sensible, nor idiomatic, nor harmonious, nor anything but an absurd and cacophonous piece of pedantry for nothing.

## CONCERNING 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

Of all the changes introduced into the Text of the Revised Version, perhaps none raised a greater storm of protest than the alteration of the words:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable

so as to make the passage read:

Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable.

This apparently slight alteration gives an entirely different direction to the meaning of the verse, for it suggests that there may be Scriptures which are not given by inspiration of God.

Competent scholars have repeatedly pointed out that there is no sufficient warrant for this alteration. We therefore need not dwell upon it further.

## THE TESTIMONY OF THE VERSION OF 1911

Concerning the merits, or demerits, of the many thousands of changes in translation introduced by the Revisers of 1881, we direct attention to the judgment of the committee of thirty-four Hebrew and Greek scholars who prepared the Tercentenary Edition of the Bible.

The task entrusted to them was:

A careful scrutiny of the Text, with the view of correcting, in the light of the best modern research, such passages as are recognised by all scholars as in any measure misleading or needlessly obscure.

As we understand it, this was substantially the work that the Revisers of 1881 had been instructed and expected to perform.

The result of the committee, examination of the entire Text of the English Bible in 1911 was that they rejected more than ninety-eight per cent of the alterations introduced by the Revisers of 1881.

In other words, they accepted fewer than two out of every hundred changes introduced by the earlier Revisers.

From the Preface to the Tercentenary Edition of the Bible, issued by Oxford University Press in 1911, we quote the following:

The continued confidence of the Church Universal throughout English-speaking lands in the Authorised Version is seasoned and mature. Despite a limited number of passages in which the Revisers of 1611 seem to have missed the true meaning, and of a number of other passages which have, through changed usage, become obscure, the Authorised Version is still the English Bible.

So it is, and so it is likely to remain until the end.

This Tercentenary Commemoration Edition of 1911 may properly be regarded as the carefully considered verdict of a representative

company of scholars chosen especially for their knowledge of biblical Hebrew and Greek and of all matters relating to the Text of the Holy Scriptures.

Their verdict was reached after the two Versionsthe Authorised Version and the Revised Versionhad stood side by side for comparative examination for a period of thirty years.

In our judgment, their verdict was fully warranted by the facts, and the passage of time since it was delivered has served only to confirm it.

## CHAPTER IX

*The Use Made Of The Margin In The Revised Version*

In preparing the Authorised Version, the translators adopted the useful practice of placing an alternative reading in the margin in the few and comparatively unimportant passages that appeared to admit of one.

The margin was also used to provide the meaning of proper names appearing in the Text and occasional items of information intended to assist the reader in understanding the Scriptures.

This was the precedent available to the Revisers for their guidance.

Furthermore, one of the rules adopted by the Revision Committee required that whenever a change was made in the Greek Text, that change should be indicated in the margin.

Nevertheless, in preparing the new Version, the Committee departed entirely from the practice of the Authorised Version and completely disregarded the rule just mentioned.

Dean Burgon stated that:

use has been made of the margin to insinuate suspicion and distrust in countless particulars as to the authenticity of the text which has been suffered to remain unaltered.

In the same volume, The Revision Revised, he wrote:

The Revisionists have not corrected the ‚Known Textual Errors., On the other hand, besides silently adopting most of those wretched fabrications which are just now in favour with the German school, they have encumbered their margin with those other readings which, after due examination, they had themselves deliberately rejected. . . .

What else must be the result of all this, but general uncertainty,

confusion, and distress? A hazy mistrust of all Scripture has been insinuated into the hearts and minds of multitudes who, for this cause, have been forced to become doubters; yes, doubters in the truth of Revelation itself.

How was it to have been believed that the Revisionists would show themselves industrious in sowing broadcast over four continents doubts as to the truth of Scripturedoubts which it will never be in their power to remove or recall?

And here we must renew our protest against the wrong which has been done to English readers by the Revisionists, disregard of the fourth rule laid down for their guidance, namely, that whenever they adopted a new textual reading, such reading was to be ,indicated in the margin.,

Addressing the Revisers concerning their failure in duty to the English reader, he asked:

How comes it to pass that you have never furnished him the information you stood pledged to furnish, but have, instead, volunteered on every page information worthless in itself, which can only serve to unsettle the faith of unlettered millions, and to suggest unreasonable as well as miserable doubts to the minds of all?

EXAMPLES OF VAGARIES IN THE MARGINAL NOTES

THE NAME JESUS

Matthew 1:18 in the Authorised Version reads:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.

The marginal note in the Revised Version states:

Some ancient authorities read ,of the Christ.,

That is to say, they omit the name Jesus.

But Dean Burgon wrote:

Now what are the facts? Not one single known manuscript omits the word Jesus; while its presence is vouched for by the fathers Tatian, Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Cyril, in addition to every known Greek copy of the Gospels, and not a few of the Versions.

## THINE IS THE KINGDOM

In Matthew 6:13, the Revisers rejected the important clause:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

In the margin they inserted the following note:

Many authorities, some ancient, but with variations, add, ‚For thine is the kingdom‚and so forth.

Concerning this radical alteration of the Text and the marginal note attached to it, Dean Burgon wrote:

All the manuscripts in the world more than five hundred but nine contain these words. Is it in any way credible that, in a matter like this, they should all have become corrupted? No hypothesis is needed to account for this another instance of omission in copies which exhibit a mutilated text on every page.

## THE SON OF GOD

The first marginal note in the Gospel of Mark concerns the supremely important words in the opening verse:

the Son of God.

The note states:

Some ancient authorities omit ‚the Son of God.‚

But the fact is, according to Dean Burgon, that:

the words are found in every known copy but three, in all the Versions, and in many fathers. The evidence in favour of the clause is therefore overwhelming.

What purpose could the Revisers have had in raising suspicion concerning a verse of supreme importance when the evidence for its authenticity leaves no room for reasonable doubt?

## WHERE THEIR WORM DIETH NOT

Concerning Mark 9:44,48 and other passages, Dean Burgon wrote in The Revision Revised:

Not only has a fringe of most unreasonable textual mistrust been tacked on to the margin of every inspired page, as from Luke 10:41,11:11; not only has many a grand doctrinal statement been evacuated of its authority, as by the shameful misstatement found in the margin against John 3:13, affecting the important words ‚which is in heaven‚, and the vile Socinian gloss which disfigures the margin of Romans 9:5, Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever,; but we entirely miss many a solemn utterance of the Spirit, as when we are assured that verses 44 and 46 of Mark 9 are omitted by ‚the best ancient authorities‚, whereas, on the contrary, the manuscripts referred to are the worst.

## WHICH IS IN HEAVEN

Concerning the marginal note on John 3:13 referred to above

Many ancient authorities omit ‚which is in heaven‚

Dean Burgon asked with indignation:

Why are we not rather assured that the precious clause in question is found in every manuscript in the world except five of bad character? It is recognised by all the Latin and all the Syrian Versions; it is either quoted or insisted upon by a host of fathers; in short, it is quite above suspicion.

Why are we not told that? Those ten Versions, those thirty-eight fathers, that host of copies in the proportion of 995 to 5 why, concerning all these, is there not so much as a hint that such a mass of counter-evidence exists?

Surely such suppression of the facts and misrepresentation of the truth concerning a passage of supreme importance touching the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ deserves the strongest condemnation.

## THE NUMBER OF A MAN

In Revelation 13:18, opposite the words:

and his number is Six hundred threescore and six,

the Revisers inserted a note stating:

Some ancient authorities read six hundred and sixteen.

Concerning this, Dean Burgon asked:

Why are we not informed that only one corrupt uncial, only one cursive, only one father, and not one ancient Version, advocates this reading?

Irenaeus, on the contrary, who wrote about A.D. 170, knew of the reading but rejected it, remarking that ‚666‚‚ which is ‚found in all the best and oldest copies, and is attested by men who saw John face to face‚‚ is unquestionably the true reading.

## THE ISLAND OF MELITA

Finally, from Dean Burgon, list of useless marginal glosses introduced by the Revisers, we take the following as a typical example.

Concerning Acts 28:1, he asked:

For what conceivable reason is the world now informed that, instead of Melita, ‚some ancient authorities read Militene‚? Is every pitiful blunder of the Codex Vaticanus to live on in the margin of every Englishman, copy of the New Testament for ever?

After showing that all other manuscripts, all Latin Versions, all fathers who quote the passage, together with the coins and ancient geographers, read Melita, he stated that this reading:

has also been acquiesced in by every critical editor of the New Testament, excepting always Drs Westcott and Hort, from the invention of printing until now.

He then asked:

But because those two misguided men, without apology, explanation, note, or comment of any kind, have adopted Militene into their Text, is the Church of England to be dragged through the mire also, and made ridiculous in the eyes of Christendom?

## CHAPTER X

### *The Theory Of Westcott And Hort*

We believe that this little volume, uncompromisingly condemnatory as it is of the Version of 1881and particularly of the Greek Text upon which that Version is basedshould not be published without at least a brief account of the theory upon which Drs Westcott and Hort constructed their New Text.

That theory was set out by them in their long and elaborate Introduction to the New Testament, published at the same time as the Revised Version in 1881.

We need hardly say that, to Westcott and Hort themselves, and doubtless to others also, there appeared to be good and sufficient reasons for the conclusions they reached.

To us, however, their conclusions appear to rest entirely upon inference and conjecture. More than that, they appear to be directly contrary to all the known and relevant facts.

Our suspicions are aroused at the outset by the circumstance that Drs Westcott and Hort reached their conclusions through the exercise of that mysterious faculty of critical intuition with which the higher critics of modern times claim to be endowed, but whose nature and operation they are unable to explain.

We refer to the supposed faculty by which certain scholars of the German school of higher criticism claim to discern that various books of the Biblesuch as Genesis, Isaiah, and even the Gospelsare composite works produced by several authors and editors.

Those authors and editors, we are told, combined a number of independent documents, although every trace of those documents has disappeared and there is not the slightest proof that any one of them ever existed.

The same remarkable and mysterious faculty of critical intuition supposedly enables those who possess it to separate these composite writings into their original elements and even to assign an approximate date to each supposed source.

In the same manner, Drs Westcott and Hort set out at extraordinary length what they called their theory of Conflation.

This wordprobably unfamiliar to most of our readersis made to bear much of the weight of their theory. That theory certainly possesses the quality of novelty, whatever else it may lack.

We should therefore explain what they mean.

Drs Westcott and Hort admitted that our Textus Receptus, in substantially the form in which we now possess it, existed during and before the fourth century and was dominant in Syria and elsewhere.

They nevertheless claimed that it was a conflationthat is, a composite Text formed by combining two earlier Texts. The word conflate means to fuse or combine separate things into one.

Did they offer proof of this claim?

They offered none.

They merely claimed to have discerned it by means of the mysterious faculty of critical intuition.

But how do we know that they possessed this ability or that they exercised it correctly in this instance?

We have only their own word for it.

Since the method by which the modern school of higher criticism, originating in Germany during the last century, reaches its results will doubtless be unfamiliar to many of our readers, we owe it to them to explain the Westcott and Hort theorywhich bears a close family resemblance to that methodas plainly and simply as possible:

And this will we do, if God permit.

Thus far, we have only the word of two scholars for the following propositions:

1. They claimed to have discerned that the Received Text had been formed, sometime before the fourth century, by the conflation

or fusion of two earlier forms of the Text.

2. They also claimed to possess the abilityalthough they did not explain how, and presumably believed we could not understand the process even if they didto separate this composite Text into its original elements.

This, however, is only the first step in the process by which they finally arrived at the conclusion that the Text of Westcott and Hort, produced between 1870 and 1881, was the true Text of the original Scriptures and should therefore replace the Received Text.

The only evidence they offered to justify this first step was that, after examining the whole Received Text, they discovered seven passagessome consisting merely of short phrases or individual wordswhich appeared to them as though they might have been formed by combining different readings.

Other scholars find nothing in those passages to indicate conflation.

But even if the clearest evidence of conflation existed in all seven scattered passages, what proof would that provide that the entire Text was produced by combining two separate and previously existing Texts?

It would provide none whatever.

The Westcott and Hort theoryif it can properly be described as a theorytherefore breaks down completely at its first stage.

Nevertheless, we shall follow the process through its successive stages, for it is at least interesting as an intellectual curiosity.

Having assumed the existence of two distinct primitive Texts earlier than what they called the dominant Antiochian Textwhich corresponds to our Received Textthey gave them the names Western and Neutral.

Since these primitive Texts were entirely the products of their scholarly imagination, they naturally possessed an unquestionable right to give them whatever names they pleased.

We must always remember, however, that there is not the slightest proof that either of these primitive Texts ever existed.

What has been overwhelmingly established, and was admitted by Drs Westcott and Hort, is that a Text practically identical with our Received Text existed and was dominant in Antioch and elsewhere

during and before the fourth century.

The next in the series of pure conjectures and bold assumptions by which Dr Hortfor the theory appears to have been chiefly his own contribution to the joint enterprisereached his conclusion was the claim that, of these two supposed primitive Texts, the Neutral Text was the purer and the Western Text the more corrupt.

The speculation has now passed almost beyond our reach.

How can anyone form even a conjectural opinion as to which of two supposed Texts was purer when neither is known to have existed at all?

Dean Burgon was surely justified in describing the whole speculation as:

an excursion into cloud-land; a dream, and nothing more.

But we have not yet reached the end of the matter.

What benefit would there be in knowing that the supposed Neutral Text existed in the fourth century, and that it correctly represented the original inspired Writings, if that Neutral Text no longer existed?

Dr Hort was equal to this difficulty.

He completed his long chain of conjecture by declaring that Codex Bthe Vatican manuscriptwas a representative of the supposed Neutral Text.

Was any proof offered in support of this far-reaching assertion?

None whatever.

And how could there be?

Until it has been proved that the wholly imaginary Neutral Text ever existed, and that it existed before the Received, or so-called Syrian, Text came into being, how can we even consider whether the Vatican Codex is a surviving representative of it?

Dean Burgon was not far wrong when he described the whole theory as:

mere moonshine.

Indeed, it appears to us either to be solemn trifling with a matter of supreme importance or a deliberate attempt to lead the English-speaking nations, and through them the whole world, astray without the slightest support from real evidence and in direct opposition to all the relevant facts.

Dean Burgon, in his extensive analysis of Dr Hort, theory, wrote:

Bold assertions abound, as usual with this repeated writer, but proof he never attempts any. Not a particle of evidence is adduced.

And again:

But we demur to this weak imagination, which only by courtesy can be called a theory, on every ground, and are constrained to remonstrate with our would-be guides at every step. They assume everything. They prove nothing. And the facts of the case lend them no favour at all.

What we are dealing with, therefore, is not truly a theory but a dreama construction composed entirely of unsupported assumptions:

destitute not only of proof, but even of probability.

Such was the ingenious device, the piece of intellectual sleight of hand, by which a group of scholars was persuaded to accept a single manuscript of the fourth centuryfor Dr Hort rested almost his whole case upon the Codex Vaticanusas evidence of an imaginary Text supposedly more ancient than the Text acknowledged to have been dominant throughout wide regions long before that manuscript was produced.

The following words of Dean Burgon deserve particular attention:

The one great Fact which especially troubles himDr Hortand his joint editor, as well it may, is the Traditional Greek Text of the New Testament Scriptures.

Call this Text Erasmian or Complutensian, the Text of Stephens, or of Beza, or of the Elzevirs; call it the Received or the Traditional, or by whatever other name you pleasethe fact remains that a Text has come down to us which is attested by a general consensus of ancient Copies, ancient Fathers, and ancient Versions.

Obtained from a variety of sources, this Text proves to be essentially the same in all. That it requires revision in respect of many of its lesser details is undeniable; but it is at least as certain that it is an excellent Text as it stands, and that the use of it will never lead critical students of the Scriptures seriously astray.

In marked contrast with this Received Text, which is identical with the Text of every extant Lectionary of the Greek Church, is that contained in a little handful of documents, of which the most famous are the Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

The editors of the Revised Version systematically magnified the

supposed merits of these seriously corrupt manuscripts.

At the same time, they carefully ignored their many obvious and scandalous defects, apparently determined, by one means or another, to establish their supreme authority whenever possible.

When that was plainly impossible, their purpose appears to have been:

to treat their errors as the ancient Egyptians treated their cats, dogs, monkeys, beetles, and other vermin, namely, to embalm them, and pay them divine honours.

Dean Burgon added:

Such, for the last fifty years, has been the practice of the dominant school of textual criticism among ourselves.

## BISHOP ELLICOTT IN DEFENCE OF THE REVISED VERSION

But what did the Revisers themselves say in answer to all this?

How did they attempt to justify their conclusions and the methods by which those conclusions had been reached?

Our readers will doubtless be asking these questions, and we are able to answer them from the highest authority.

The Chairman of the Revision Committee, Bishop Ellicott, published two replies to the criticisms of the Revised Version made by Dean Burgon and others.

One of Bishop Ellicott, papers appeared in 1882.

The other was a more mature defence published in book form under the title The Revised Version of Holy Scripture in 1901, twenty years after the first edition of the Revised Version appeared.

An examination of Bishop Ellicott, defence of the work of his Committee tends to confirm rather than weaken the objections we have presented.

Regarding the matter we consider most importantthe Committee, adoption of a New Greek Text closely following that of Westcott and HortBishop Ellicott rested his case entirely upon the opinions of Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

He assumed that their favourite principle of ancient witnesses only was sound, but made no attempt to answer the facts and arguments advanced against it by Scrivener, Burgon, Cook, Beckett, Salmon, Malan, and others.

The precise issue in dispute was whether the guiding principle adopted by Lachmann and his two successorsa principle arising from the German school of criticism, which was then beginning its destructive careerwas safe and sound.

Bishop Ellicott carefully avoided this issue in both of his published defences.

When we consider the powerful attack made upon that critical principle by scholars of the first rank, and the fact that Bishop Ellicott ignored that part of the case entirely when attempting to answer them, we are justified in concluding that the objections raised against the principle were unanswerable.

There is more.

Bishop Ellicott had himself previously published the very same objections against the method of Lachmann and the modern school of textual criticism.

In his work On Revision, published in 1870, the learned Bishop declared that Lachmann, was:

a Text composed on the narrowest and most exclusive principles;

and that it was:

really based on little more than four manuscripts.

Concerning Tischendorf, he had written:

The case of Tischendorf is still more easily disposed of. Which of this most inconstant critic, Texts are we to select? Surely not the last, in which an exaggerated preference for a single manuscript has betrayed him into an almost childlike infirmity of judgment.

He had condemned Tregelles in equally uncompromising terms.

Yet when the defence of the Revised Version depended upon it, this learned scholarwho, more than any other individual, was responsible for the form finally given to itcould do no better than appeal to the opinions of the very same modern and radical editors whose work he had previously declared unworthy of confidence.

When Bishop Ellicott prepared his defence in 1882, Westcott and Hort had only recently published their New Greek Text and the theory supporting it.

Bishop Ellicott therefore attempted to make use of that theory by insisting that those who objected to the Revised Version ought to answer it.

He did not have to wait long.

Dean Burgon, powerful attack, strongly supported by Dr Scrivenerthe ablest textual critic of the dayand others, appeared at approximately the same time.

So far as we are aware, Bishop Ellicott made no response to this criticism until he published the book already mentioned in 1901.

When we turn to that volume, we find that he again ignored the central issue.

We also find that, instead of continuing to endorse Dr Hort, upon whom he had relied so heavily in 1882 and by whom the Revision Committee had been led astray, he virtually abandoned him.

Bishop Ellicott referred to a work published in 1897 by Dr Salmon of Trinity College, Dublin. In that work, to quote the Bishop, own words:

the difficulties and anomalies and apparent perversities in the Text of Westcott and Hort are compared with the decisions of the Revisers.

Bishop Ellicott admitted that he was unable to:

resist the conviction that Dr Salmon, in his interesting Criticism of the Text of the New Testament, has successfully indicated three or more particulars which must cause some arrest in our final judgment on the Text of Westcott and Hort.

The three matters identified by Bishop Ellicott are exceedingly important.

We quote his own words.

First:

In the first place it cannot be denied that, in the introductory volume, Dr Hort has shown too distinct a tendency to elevate probable hypotheses into the realm of established facts.

This is simply another way of saying that Dr Hort relied upon conjecture, as Dean Burgon had pointed out in 1883.

Second:

In the really important matter of the nomenclature of the ancient types of Text . . . it does not seem possible to accept the titles of the fourfold division of these families of manuscripts which has been adopted by Westcott and Hort. . . . The objections to this arrangement and to this nomenclature are, as Dr Salmon very clearly shows, both

reasonable and serious.

By saying this, Bishop Ellicott abandoned something vital to Dr Hort, theory.

Third:

The third drawback to the unqualified acceptance of the Text of Westcott and Hort is their continuous and studied disregard of Western authorities.

To this grave drawback Dr Salmon has devoted a chapter to which the attention of the student may very profitably be directed.

I am persuaded that, if there should be any fresh discovery of textual authorities, it is by no means unlikely that they may be of a Western character, and if so, that many decisions in the Text of Westcott and Hort will have to be modified by some editor of the future.

At any rate, taking the critical evidence as we now find it, we cannot but feel that Dr Salmon has made out his case.

These admissions reflect credit upon the honesty and candour of the man who made them.

With regard to our present inquiry, however, their significance is clear.

It was greatly in the interest of Bishop Ellicott and his cause to uphold Dr Hort, critical theories and maintain his authority as an editor.

His admissions therefore provide very strong reason for believing that Dean Burgon, severe criticism of both the Westcott and Hort Text and their theory was fully justified.

Bishop Ellicott offered the weak plea, in mitigation of the excessive influence Dr Hort exercised over the Revision Committee, that in only sixty-four passages did the Revisers accept the readings of Westcott and Hort where those readings did not also possess the support of Lachmann, Tischendorf, or Tregelles.

This admission by the Chairman of the Revision Committee reveals precisely what support may be claimed for the New Greek Text.

We are told that it rests in some instances upon Westcott and Hort alone, but that it usually possesses the support of at least one of the three modern editors, each of whom had committed himself

completely to the unsound principle of following almost exclusively the two corrupt fourth-century Codices.

Since Bishop Ellicott himself admitted that all these modern editors were unreliable, it is not too much to say that the attempt to defend the Revised Version had completely collapsed.

The objections of Dean Burgon and others therefore remain:

unanswered and unanswerable.

## A COMPARISON AS TO STYLE

Comparing the literary qualities of the two Versions, the Bishop of Lincoln said in a conference address:

To pass from one to the other is, as it were, to alight from a well-built and well-hung carriage, which glides easily over a macadamized road, and to get into one which has bad springs or none at all, and in which you are jolted in ruts with aching bones, and over the stones of a newly mended and rarely traversed road.

Dean Burgon wrote:

The Authorised Version should have been jealously retained wherever it was possible; but on the contrary every familiar cadence has been dislocated; the congenial flow of almost every verse of Scripture has been almost hopelessly marred.

So many of those little connecting words, which give life and continuity to a narrative, have been vexatiously displaced, so that a perpetual sense of annoyance is created.

The countless minute alterations, which have been needlessly introduced into every familiar page, prove at last as tormenting as a swarm of flies to a weary traveller on a summer, day.

To speak plainly, the book has been made unreadable.

Bishop Wordsworth expressed himself in similar terms:

I fear we must say in candour that in the Revised Version we meet in every page with small changes which are vexatious, teasing, and irritating, even the more so because they are small; which seem almost to be made for the sake of change.

Nor is this merely the opinion of biblical scholars.

A writer in a popular household magazine expressed what is undoubtedly the view of a great number of Bible readers.

Speaking of one of the Versions written in modern speech, she said:

The one thing concerning it to which I object is that the sonorous sweep and beauty of the Bible are eliminated in an effort to be more literal in translation.

So ingrained in my mentality is the King James Version that any word of change in it hits me like a blow.

## CONCLUSION

What, then, shall we say concerning these things?

Shall we accept the Revised Version, whether English or American, as a substitute for the Authorised Version?

We believe that question has already been settled by the almost unanimous rejection of the modern Versions.

But can we make profitable use of the Revised Version for any purpose?

The conclusion to which the facts compel the writer of these pages is this:

Although the Revised Version contains improvementsand perhaps many improvementsthe Greek Text upon which it is based is so corrupt that it is unsafe to accept any reading differing from that of the Authorised Version until the reader has established that the alteration is supported by a clear preponderance of evidence.

Furthermore, in the important matter of translation, we believe the general judgment of the most competent authorities to be that the Authorised Version is vastly superior to the Version of 1881.

Finally, regarding style and composition, the advantage lies so overwhelmingly with the older Version that it would be little short of a calamity if it were displaced by the Revised Version.

## THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

We have said that the question of whether the Revised Version should replace the Authorised Version has been settled by the people themselves.

Whatever their reasons, and whether or not they have been influenced by the Spirit of God, they have rejected the new Version with increasing emphasis.

The report of the British Bible Society for 1911 showed that approximately four per centone in every twenty-five of the Bibles and Testaments issued by that Society during the year were copies of the Revised Version.

The full report issued in 1920 showed that fewer than two per centless than one in every fiftywere copies of the Revised Version.

The proportion of those using the Revised Version was therefore not only small but steadily declining.

Of the few copies still being requested, a considerable proportion would have been purchased merely for reference and study rather than for regular use.

**NOTES**

[1] See the Preface to the Edition of 1885 and the Preface to the American Edition; also the Appendix to the former, in which the readings preferred by the American members of the Committee were given.

[2] See the reports of Bible societies referred to later in this volume.

[3] Codex is a name given to an ancient manuscript book. Approximately 114 known biblical codices are written on parchment in uncial charactersthat is, in capital letters written continuously without spacesand date from the fourth to the tenth century. There are also approximately twelve hundred manuscripts known as cursives, written in a running hand and dating from the ninth to the sixteenth century, which contain the Gospels, together with about five hundred manuscripts containing the remainder of the New Testament.

[4] Mauro, original footnote reads: It is easy to understand why this particular manuscript is cherished at the Vatican; for its corruptions are what make it valuable to the leaders of the papal system. We can therefore understand the satisfaction of those leaders that their highly prized manuscript has been permitted to play the leading part in the revision of the English Bible, than which there is nothing on earth they have more reason to fear. On the other hand, may not this be one of the causes why God, in His overruling providence, has frustrated the attempt to displace the Authorised Version by a new Version based upon such a sandy foundation?

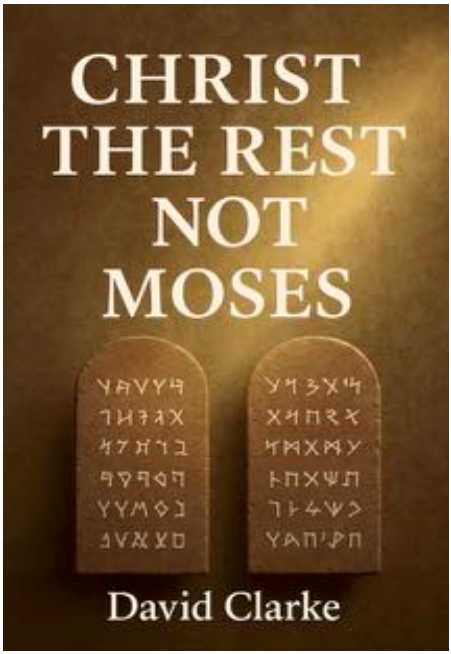
[5] For several centuries after Christ, Greek manuscripts were written entirely in capital letters. Manuscripts written in this form, which include the most ancient copies, are called uncials. In later

centuries, the custom developed of using capital letters only at the beginning of sentences and for proper names. This style of writing is called cursive.

[6] It should be observed that the authority granted was for a revision of the English Authorised Version, not for a revision of the Greek Text.

## FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

## CHRIST THE REST, NOT MOSES




By David Clarke
*Author of Converted on LSD Trip*

*"Let us labour therefore… to enter into that rest."* – Hebrews 4:11
What is the true rest promised to the people of God? Is it found in observing days and laws — or in Christ Himself?

In this bold and thought-provoking work, David Clarke draws from Scripture and personal experience to confront a foundational issue at the heart of Christian doctrine: justification by faith alone.

Clarke, once rejected by a Gospel Standard minister over his understanding of Hebrews 4, writes not to stir controversy, but to call believers back to the simplicity and power of the gospel. With a serious tone, pastoral heart, and unwavering conviction, he urges readers to turn from legalism and shadows to the finished work of Christ.

Written especially for those who love the doctrines of grace, yet feel

isolated or misunderstood, this book is a call to clarity, courage, and confidence in the rest that is found in Christ — and Christ alone.

This is not merely a theological issue. It is a matter of liberty, peace, and the very ground of our standing before God.

## CONVERTED ON LSD TRIP

The Bucks Herald

Second Edition

CONVERTED ON LSD TRIP

David Could these boys do any real wrong ? Michael

*David Clarke*

True Crime, Redemption, and the Mercy of God

This is a true and stirring account of two brothers, Michael John Clarke (b. 1946) and David Clarke (b. 1949), born and raised in Oldham, Lancashire. Growing up through the post-war years of the 1950s and the turbulence of the 1960s, their lives were deeply entwined—both for good and ill.

By their early twenties, both had fallen into serious crime: David was sent to Dover Borstal and Michael to Maidstone Prison, convicted of malicious wounding and carrying a firearm without a

licence.

But on the night of 16th January 1970, David's life took a dramatic and miraculous turn. A profound conversion to Jesus Christ changed the course of his life forever. Michael, however, remained untouched.

David's story, detailed with candour and without embellishment, charts his early life, the rebellion of his youth, and the struggles he faced in striving to follow the way of Christ. His new-found faith led him to confess to the police 24 crimes, returning much stolen property. His confession made headline news in the Bucks Herald on 11th February 1971, resulting in a remarkable conditional discharge.

In contrast, Michael continued along a very different path. After early success as Managing Director of Tudor Charm in Milton Keynes, business failure led to personal collapse. Following a broken marriage and divorce, he sought to rebuild his life abroad, first in Thailand and later in the Philippines. His ventures, tainted by controversy, culminated in a criminal conviction in 1996, and a 16-year sentence in New Bilibid Prison.

It was in this grim prison that hope finally broke through. Befriending a fellow inmate, Sunny Wilson—who was later acquitted—Michael was introduced to C.S. Lewis's Mere Christianity. Through reading, he came to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and was baptised in prison.

This story vividly portrays the goodness and mercy of God—saving one man through Christ—and the severity of God—leaving another to his own devices until the appointed time. Michael, too, was at last plucked as a brand from the burning.

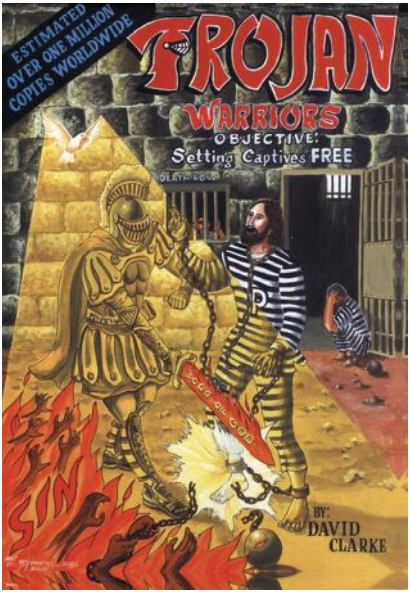
David now believes that both he and his brother were victims of manic depression (bipolar disorder), and that their faith and upbringing shaped how they responded to their inner struggles—perhaps explaining some of the remarkable experiences recorded here.

This book will be of real value to judges, magistrates, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, doctors, social workers, solicitors, policemen, ministers of religion, lecturers, teachers, probation officers, and anyone working with those at the margins of society. It will also offer hope and insight to Christians, those battling manic depression, the dyslexic, the drug user, the hardened criminal, and those facing the

pain of divorce.

A true story of crime, punishment, grace—and the unfailing mercy of God.

## TROJAN WARRIORS




*David Clarke ans Michael J. Clarke*

Setting Captives Free

BISAC: Religion / Christian Life / General

Trojan Warriors is a true story of two brothers, Michael and David Clarke, who are brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. They became criminals in the 60's and were sent to prison for malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license, in 1967.

They both turned from their lives of crimes in remarkable ways but some 25 years apart, and then they worked together helping other prison inmates, on their own roads of reformation.

David the younger brother became a Christian, after a bad experience on LSD, in 1970, and then went on to educate himself and then on to Higher Education. He became a baptist minister and taught electronics for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. Michael however remained untouched and continued his flamboyant life style ending up serving a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died of tuberculosis in 2005.

When David heard the news of his brothers arrest on an ITN television news bulletin he felt compelled to wrote their story. And then when he heard of his own brothers conversion from crime to Christ, after serving 5 year of his sentence, he published their story in his book, "Converted on LS Trip", and directed a mission of help to the Philippines to assist his brother. This book tells the story of this mission.

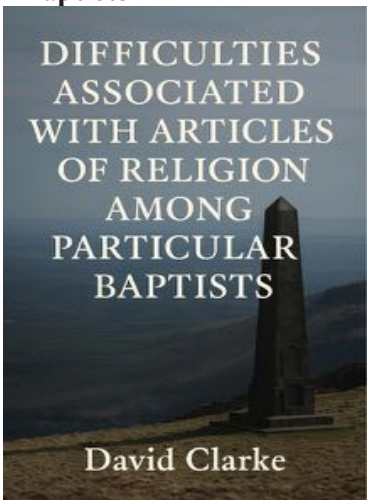
They then worked together with many former notorious criminals, who were inmates in New Bilibid Prison, who too had become Christians and turned their lives around. This help was to train them to become preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ .

This book contains the 66 testimonies of some of these men who convicted former criminals, incarcerated in New Bilibid Prison. They are the, "Trojan Warriors", who had turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. Twenty two of these testimonies are men who are on Death Row scheduled to be executed by lethal injection.

Revelation 12 verse 11: And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.

## DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION

**Among Particular Baptists**




David Clarke

This book has been written for those who find themselves troubled, confused, or even discouraged by the Articles of Religion—or Confessions of Faith—that are often required for church membership among Particular Baptists.

Throughout church history, believers have sought to express their shared understanding of the faith through creeds and confessions. While such documents can be helpful in clarifying doctrine, they can also become stumbling blocks when their language is unclear, their assertions go beyond Scripture, or when they demand an advanced theological understanding that many sincere believers may not yet possess. This is especially true for those new to the faith or those whose consciences are bound by the Word of God alone.

Drawing on personal experience, the author highlights the challenges faced when joining a Particular Baptist church, particularly in regard to conflicting or historically ambiguous articles of faith. The events surrounding the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church in the late 20th century serve as a case study—demonstrating the real pastoral and theological difficulties that can arise when church membership is restricted by confessions that are misunderstood, misapplied, or internally inconsistent.

Yet this book is not a rejection of Articles of Religion altogether. On the contrary, it affirms their importance when rightly used. The aim is not to cast off doctrinal clarity, but to call for honesty, humility, and scriptural fidelity in how churches apply such confessions. The book offers a comparison of four historical Baptist confessions, discusses controversial additions, and explores how such documents should function in the life of a church governed by grace and truth.

May this book serve as a helpful guide to those who, with a sincere desire to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, wrestle with the tensions between confessional loyalty and biblical conviction. Let it also be a call to church leaders to handle such matters with care, patience, and a deep understanding of the Gospel of Christ.

**Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.**

Contents

Articles of Religion Important
Authors Testimony

Bierton Particular Baptist Church
A Difficulty Over Articles Of Religion
Bierton Particular Baptists History
1 First London Particular Baptists Confession 1646, 2nd Edition
The Development of Articles Of Religion,Act of Toleration
Additions That Are Wrong
2 London Baptist Confession 1689
Notes on The London Baptists Confession1689
3 Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of Religion, 1831
Difficulties Over Articles of Religion
Notes on Bierton Particular Baptists 1831
4 The Gospel Standard Articles of Religion 1878
Observations of the Gospel Standard Articles of religion
Letter to Mr Role's of Luton Added Articles
My comments Article 32
The Difficulties Of these Articles Proved
Serious Doctrinal Errors Held
Recommendation for Serious Minded
5 Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan 2016
6 Appendix
Gospel Standard 31 Articles